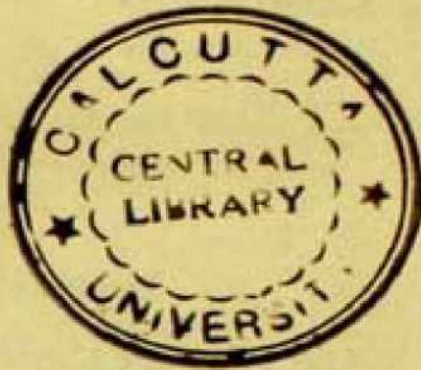


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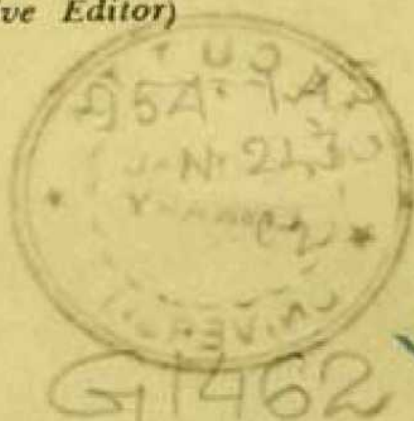
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July 1974



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শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান

ঢাকা, ২৮শে মার্চ, ১৯৭২ ইং।

কোলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় বাংলাদেশ সহায়ক সমিতি আগামী ১৫ই এপ্রিল “বাংলাদেশের” উপর এক সেমিনারের আয়োজন করেছেন জেনে আমি বিশেষভাবে আনন্দিত হয়েছি।

বাংলাদেশের সাড়ে সাত কোটি মানুষের মুক্তিসংগ্রামে সার্বিকভাবে আপনারা— বিশেষ করে আপনাদের মহান নেত্রী শ্রীমতী ইন্দিরা গান্ধী, সরকার এবং জনসাধারণ যেভাবে সাহায্য করেছেন—তা ‘কোনদিনই ভুলবার নয়। ইতিহাসে তা অমর থাকবে।

আমাদের দু’দেশের বন্ধুত্ব, মৈত্রী বহু ত্যাগ ও তিতিষ্কার মধ্যে দিয়ে গড়ে উঠেছে। আপনাদের এই সম্মেলন আমাদের দু’দেশের বন্ধুত্বকে আরো সুদৃঢ় করার সহায়ক হবে বলে আমি বিশ্বাস করি।

শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান

২৮/৩/৭২

(ENGLISH VERSION)

I am glad to learn that Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti has organized a Seminar on ‘‘Bangladesh’’ on 15 April, 1972.

We can never forget your all-out help to the freedom struggle of 750 million people of Bangladesh. Your great leader, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, the Government of India and the people deserve special mention. This is already a part of history.

Good relations and understanding between our two countries had to be fostered through patient trials and sacrifice. I am confident that the coming Seminar is going to strengthen the bonds of friendship between our two countries.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

28.3.72

PREFACE

THE READER will find in the following pages papers read by eminent scholars at an international seminar on Bangladesh organized by the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti in April, 1972, within six month of the emergence of Bangladesh as a free, independent and sovereign People's Republic. The Sahayak Samiti was formed at a time when, on the one hand, millions of helpless men and women were pouring into India from Bangladesh to escape the genocide let loose by an army seemingly gone mad, and, on the other hand, a band of death-defying freedom fighters had already begun to organize themselves for liberating their motherland once for all from the clutches of an incredibly greedy, brutal and stupid colonialists. The Sahayak Samiti rendered yeoman's service to the cause of Bangladesh. Believing as it did in the ultimate triumph of truth and justice the Samiti not only took immediate practical steps for ameliorating the sufferings of the stream of students, teachers and common men and women taking refuge in West Bengal, but also concerned itself even in these early days with theoretical and ideological issues of a more significant character. It helped the refugees, particularly of the academic community, materially and otherwise. It disseminated useful information about the situation in Bangladesh prevailing at that time ; it analysed that situation and made future projections of it for the guidance of all concerned. It mobilized public opinion at home and abroad in favour of Bangladesh based on principles which were at once humanitarian, political, economic and philosophical. And, later, after the liberation war in Bangladesh came to a gloriously successful conclusion, albeit at a cost of thirty million lives and untold misery to countless men, women and children, the Samiti decided to hold an international seminar under its auspices where scholars from various countries could deliberate on relevant political, economic and ideological issues, among other topics, connected with Bangladesh. I am glad to note that their decision was implemented fairly promptly. The proposed seminar was attended by distinguished scholars in the field of political science, economics, sociology, art and culture, literature and international relations. The sponsors of the seminar felt, quite rightly I think, that the seminar proceedings including the papers read and discussed could form a useful document partly because of its historical significance and partly because of its intrinsic merits. Hence their resolve to publish it.

The editorial board has done me a signal honour by requesting me to write a preface for this book, a task I am hardly competent to under-

take. I have, however, one point in my favour, but for which I would not have acceded to its request. I was closely associated with the work of this Samiti as well as with that of the Bangladesh Teachers' Association formed by those teachers of our bleeding motherland who had managed to flee the country in time with their lives but with little else. In fact I was aware that the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti had come into existence partly as a result of the close contact of some dedicated and distinguished academicians of the Calcutta University with the members of the Bangladesh Teachers' Association. And out of my personal association with the Samiti a bond of attachment had developed between it and me, which later made it impossible for me to refuse to comply with its request inspite of the awareness of my personal inadequacy to fill the bill. Be that as it may I am happy to link my name with this endeavour of the Samiti, perhaps its last one, before deciding to voluntarily dissolve itself.

The participants at the seminar attempted honest and searching investigation of some fundamental issues pertaining to Bangladesh. They commented not only on the past and current trends but also on the future prospects of Bangladesh in various fields. The reader is free to agree or disagree with the views of the participants, but I am sure he will find the essays presented here quite stimulating.

Dated, Dacca,
The 23rd July,
1973.

MOHAMMAD YUSUF ALI
Minister for Education, Cultural Affairs & Sports,
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

EDITORIAL NOTE

THE PAPERS, published in this volume, were presented and discussed in the International Seminar on Bangladesh, held under the aegis of Calcutta University and Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti and sponsored by the University Grants Commission in April, 1972. The Seminar encouraged the participants to make a searching analysis into the socio-political, cultural and economic realities of Bangladesh. It is a fact, some of the articles have emotional overtones. It would have been surprising if there had not been any. The politico-economic and psychological impact of the emergence of Bangladesh on India has been very complex. It is refreshing to note that most of the participants were fully aware of this complex situation.

The papers can be broadly divided into four sections—(i) political, (ii) economic, (iii) cultural and (iv) legal, taking into account the question of human rights. Understandably the sections on political and economic realities are larger. The section on cultural impact, one would have wished, were more adequately represented, for, the Bangladesh movement, we must not forget, got started chiefly on linguistic issue as early as 1948, though in subsequent phases other issues were responsible for its acceleration.

Several participants have pointed out that it would be an oversimplification of the problem to read the Bangladesh movement as essentially socio-political. One contributor at any rate has pointed out the complex character of Bangladesh movement. It could have been supplemented by studies of the linguistico-cultural-ethnic character of the movement. In the long run, the political and economic realities will have been rooted in this distinctive character.

It should not be overlooked that in a fast-changing world, political and economic realities constantly adjust themselves. The political and economic situation, analysed in the following essays, has perhaps already changed, and in some cases, appears to be no longer valid. This, by no means, takes the credit of the contributors, for they had to restrict themselves to the analysis of the situation at the beginning of 1972. If it be true that some of them are myopic, it is equally true that they have firmly got hold of some features which are true for all times. It is well-known that political and economic tensions are still building up in Bangladesh. The new republic emerging out of the eclipse it suffered for a quarter of a century is faced with serious challenges, both at home

and abroad. The solution of yesterday will not do for the more complex problems of to-day. If some pressing problems have by now been solved, newer ones have cropped up. The papers, collected in this volume, give us an idea of how one generation of teachers, political workers and sociologists reacted to the realities of Bangladesh movement. The volume may also provide guidelines for other generations to solve the more urgent problems of their own. The Editors will feel amply rewarded if the papers, collected here, impel intellectuals and educationists, politicians and social workers, both in Bangladesh and India, to face this challenge, which may well occupy their attention till the end of this century.

The Seminar had the good wishes of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the architect of Bangladesh. It is our proud privilege that we could include his inspiring message in this volume. Prof. Yusuf Ali, Minister of Education, Cultural Affairs and Sports of Bangladesh also responded instantly to our request in writing a preface for this volume. His hearty note adds grace to the papers. We are really indebted to them.

Before we conclude we feel called upon to say a few words of grateful appreciation in indicating the role of Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti. Under the dynamic leadership of its Secretary, the Samiti had played not only a significant part, assisting all the while Bangladesh Teachers in distress and the freedom fighters in their struggle, but also in comprehending in the larger interest of the cause the urgency and importance of a Seminar by organising opinions and setting the issues in their right perspective.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the generous help given me by Prof. Saila Kumar Ghosh, Prof. Jnanes Patranabis and Sri Sudhakanta De in reading the manuscripts. The indulgence of my colleagues on the Editorial Board and the ungrudging co-operation of Dr. R. K. Sen have only helped me finish this arduous job. Sri Kanan Mitra of Sarat Press and Sri N. B. Mukherjee of Radiant Process were all help and kindness.

Numerous causes, not all within our control, contributed to the delay in publication of this volume. If the Editors have to offer anything for this delay, it would be their earnest regret.

Executive Editor

PART ONE

INAUGURATION

DILIP CHAKRAVARTY

Welcome Address

ON BEHALF of the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti I accord my hearty welcome to all those who are present in this International Seminar. I would like to give a short summary of the activities of this Samiti during the trying months of the liberation of Bangladesh.

Aga Mohammad Yahya Khan, the then President of Pakistan, left Dacca on March 25, 1971 behind a screen of utmost secrecy. On that fateful day "Dacca Airport looked like the tightly-laced front line Airfield of an alien army at war". Yahya came to Dacca not with a view to achieving success in his dialogue with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he came only to buy time for completing the preparation for a military crackdown on the 7.5 crores of innocent civilians, whose only crime was to give their verdict in favour of their chosen leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in an election which was on all counts free and fair.

The news of the military crackdown reached Calcutta the next day. On 27th March the Senate of the Calcutta University met for its annual budget meeting under the Presidentship of Prof. P. K. Bose, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, then Acting Vice-Chancellor. The only thing the Senate did that day was to take note of the military crackdown on the civilian population in Bangladesh with particular reference to the killing of teachers and students of Dacca University. The Senate adopted a resolution in Bengali. It was also decided in course of the discussion that Calcutta University would not remain an idle spectator

and should come forward to do something concrete in support of the cause of Bangladesh in its humble way.

A structural shape was given to the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti with Prof. S. N. Sen, Vice-Chancellor, as the President, Dr. P. K. Bose, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic), as the Working President, Sri H. M. Majumdar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (B & F), as the Treasurer and with representatives of students, employees, teachers, officers and various bodies of the University. The Samiti was strengthened with co-option of an alumnus, Sm. Bina Bhowmik, who led a team inside Jessore on March 29 and continued to supply food and other materials to the fighting liberation forces inside Bangladesh up to April 13.

The Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti formally started work with an office of the Samiti provided by the University of Calcutta from April 3, 1971. The immediate programmes were to help the Mukti Fauj forces fighting inside Bangladesh and to support the teachers and intellectuals from Bangladesh who were seeking shelter in India.

On May 9, the Birthday of Poet Rabindranath Tagore, the Samiti started a programme of publications. Our publication, "Bangladesh : The Truth" written by Dr. Bangendu Ganguli and Dr. (Mrs.) Mira Ganguli, was brought out on May 9 with a foreword from Professor S. N. Sen, our Vice-Chancellor and President of the Samiti. The subsequent publications were as follows :

2. "Conflict in East Pakistan—Background and Prospects" written by Professors Edward S. Mason, Robert Dorffman, Stephen A. Marglin (a reprint from a paper supplied to us by the Publicity and Information Department of the Government of Bangladesh).
3. "Bangladesh Through Lens"—the first picture album.
4. "Bangladesh—Throes of a New life" edited by Dr. Bangendu Ganguli and Dr. (Mrs.) Mira Ganguli.
5. "Pakistanism and Bengali Culture" by Osman Jamal of Chittagong University.
6. "Bleeding Bangladesh" edited by Sm. Sipra Aditya—a picture album on genocide in Bangladesh.

Our Bengali publications were as follows :

1. "Bangladesher Muktiyuddhe" edited by Prof. Jatindranath Chattopadhyay and with a foreword from Sri Annadasankar Ray.
2. "Muktiyuddhe Bangladesh" by Prof. Ahsad-uz-zaman.
3. "Six-Point Programme" of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
4. "The Historic Speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" delivered at Dacca on 7th March, 1971.

5. "Muktiyoddhader Prati" edited by Prof. Sukumar Biswas on behalf of the Bangladesh Sikshak Samiti and Prof. Jatindranath Chattopadhyay on behalf of the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti.

All our English publications were sent to nearly 2,000 addresses all the world over. The recipients were the University centres, the academicians, journalists, leading politicians, rotarians, including many units of the Samiti in different places. In the process we could have nearly 200 useful contacts throughout the world. Each was propagating the cause of Bangladesh.

We owe a deep gratitude to Shri N. B. Mukherjee of the Radiant Process, Shri Ajit Mohan Gupta of Bharat Phototype Studio and Shri Barindra Mitra of the Good Company for bringing out the publications according to schedule.

The Samiti sent out non-official emissaries to different lands. They were :

(1) Father P. Fallon, S. J., Head of the Department of European Languages, University of Calcutta, visited His Holiness the Pope in the Vatican and held Press Conferences and appeared in Television in June, 1971 in France, Belgium, Italy, Holland and West Germany. Everywhere Father Fallon demonstrated with photographs and eye-witnesses' accounts about the genocide perpetrated inside Bangladesh and sought to rouse the conscience of the world.

(2) Justice A. K. Das (Retd.) of the Calcutta High Court visited the U. K. in July, held several meetings in that country narrating the terrible happenings inside Bangladesh.

(3) Mr. Bansi Bhai Mehta and Mrs. Sushila Mehta of Bombay toured round the Continent and the U. K. meeting academicians, students and journalists in groups in July and August, 1971 and distributed our pamphlets.

(4) Sri Shibnath Banerjee, renowned Trade Union leader and freedom fighter, was sent to Afghanistan in October, 1971.

(5) Sri Purnendu Ray went to the U. K. and the United States with our accreditation. He held series of meetings with University men, journalists and public men of importance in different places in the United States in October, 1971. On his way back he also toured round the Continent and the U.K.

Our Prime Minister, Sm. Indira Gandhi, was kept informed of all these and other activities from time to time which she could appreciate.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that the Bangladesh Sikshak Samiti was formed with teachers from Bangladesh in a meeting held at Asutosh Hall, Calcutta University, on May 22 under the Presidentship of Dr. A. R. Mallick, Vice-Chancellor, Chittagong University. We are proud to recall that it was possible for us to organize the meeting. The Bangladesh Sikshak Samiti was formed with Dr. A. R. Mallick as President, Janab

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Quamruzzaman M.C.A. as Executive President, Dr. Anisuzzaman as Secretary, Janab Anwaruzzaman & Sri Rashbehari Ghosh as Assistant Secretaries. Subsequently Dr. Ajoy Ray of Dacca University took over as the Secretary of the Bangladesh Sikshak Samiti. During the period joint teams of teachers from the Bangladesh Sikshak Samiti and the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti were sent out to visit different University centres in India in order to apprise them of the situation inside Bangladesh. Dr. A. R. Mallick, President of the Bangladesh Sikshak Samiti and presently the Ambassador of Bangladesh in India, led the teams almost on all the occasions. Others who were included in the team from time to time were Dr. Anisuzzaman, Janab Subid Ali M.C.A., Prof. Ali Ahsan, presently Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dr. Aniruddha Ray, Professors Vishnukant Sastri, Saurindranath Bhattacharyya, Anil Sarkar, Dr. Buddhadeva Bhattacharyya and Dr. Subimal Kumar Mukherjee. Dr. Mazharul Islam visited Madhya Pradesh and Kerala. His Kerala visit was sponsored by us.

The Samiti prepared several schemes with the help of University scholars to aid and assist the teachers and the intellectuals from Bangladesh. Dr. K. M. Mukherjee, Dr. Bangendu Ganguli, Prof. Anil Sarkar, Prof. P. Sensarma deserve special mention in this connexion. Our Vice-Chancellor, Prof. S. N. Sen, carried the schemes to Delhi and took them up with the University Grants Commission and the Government of India.

One such scheme was the scheme of Camp School Project. With the initiative of the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti and the Bangladesh Sikshak Samiti ultimately 51 camp schools could be started all around Bangladesh providing employment to over 700 teachers and serving over 20,000 students. The International Rescue Committee provided Bangladesh Sikshak Samiti with funds for paying teachers' salaries in these camp schools. The Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti supplied stationeries and other requirements from the beginning. On account of the camp schools the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti spent a total sum of Rs. 1,70,459.93.

The Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti started and maintained a register of teachers and intellectuals from Bangladesh and forwarded the same to different universities urging the absorption of some of these teachers on temporary basis. In the process temporary employment opportunities could be provided to more than 200 such scholars in different Universities, Research institutes, and other institutions in India. Dr. Phani Bhushan Datta of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science absorbed the largest number for any single institution. The list of these scholars was forwarded to foreign Universities as well. On the basis of the information supplied many scholars received invitation from foreign universities and institutes and some of them accepted these offers.

The Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti provided direct financial assistance to more than 5,000 teachers from time to time. Apart from financial assistance, the Samiti provided the teachers with shelter, blankets, clothings and other equipment and medicines, etc. Professors Anil Sarkar, Tarun Sanyal, Jnanes Patranabis, P. Sensarma & Sm. Mrinmoyee Bose deserve amongst others special mention on this score.

During the period we received financial contributions from various sources both from inside the country as also from outside. We received not only donations in money but also in kind. The first donation in cheque to the Samiti was received from Professor S. N. Bose, our National Professor. The first cash donation was received from the teachers of the Krishnanagar Women's College. The first bulk of medicines as donation was received from Dr. P. K. Chatterjee, a member of the Senate, Calcutta University. The first donation in kind of clothes was received from Sadharan Brahmo Samaj through Sri Arun Kumar Sen. The first donation of handspun pullovers for Mukti Fauj was made by Mrs. Chhabi Datta of Bolepur. The first set of water-bottles as donation for Mukti Fauj was received through Prof. Indira Dasgupta and Sri Netai Pal, an employee of this University. Nearly 50,000 dry food packets were received by the Samiti through Sm. Bina Bhowmik, Prof. Indira Dasgupta and Sm. Kamala Bose which were supplied to the Jessore and the Kusthia Sectors. The highest ever donation received from one single source was through Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. The highest donation received from a University was through Dr. P. B. Gajendragadkar, the then Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University. The highest donation received from any single source from outside India was from Australian National University through Prof. Atin Majumdar. The officers, employees, teachers and students of different departments of the University of Calcutta contributed their mite to the funds of the Samiti. The teachers of affiliated colleges also fell in the line and made their contributions. Mention of each group of donors is available in our monthly reports published in January. Prof. Edger Lederer of France and Miss Evelyn Chaitkin of the U.S.A. deserve mention in this connexion.

The World University Service offered a massive contribution to the funds of the Samiti. We owe a word of gratitude to Mr. Chidambaramathan, Secretary-General of the World University Service, Geneva and Mr. Thiagarajan, Executive Secretary, Indian National Committee of the World University Service, Delhi.

The services rendered by the University of Calcutta for the cause of Bangladesh should be placed on record. Prof. S. N. Sen, the Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University and President of the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti, has all along shown keen interest in seeing the implementation of the various programmes of the Samiti. Prof. P. K. Bose, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs and the Working President

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of the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti and Sri H. M. Majumdar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Business Affairs and Finance, were always available during the period to guide us in our day-to-day activities. Besides, the University of Calcutta provided the Samiti with office accommodation, furniture and fittings, services of staff of all categories and other facilities during the entire period. As a matter of fact, the Samiti could carry on its day-to-day programme very smoothly for the ungrudging co-operation of staff of all categories and it gives me great pleasure that none of them ever denied whenever I asked anybody to do anything for the Samiti.

We beg to record our gratitude to Dr. Bibekmohan Sengupta, Dr. Prabodh Ray, Dr. P. K. Chatterjee and Dr. S. Choudhury who helped in the matter of treatment of ailing teachers and intellectuals from Bangladesh and also cadres of the Mukti Bahini whoever sought our assistance.

We planned as part of our various activities to hold a Seminar on Bangladesh. Originally it was decided to hold the seminar in December, 1971. But ultimately it had to be postponed for obvious reasons. Since the beginning we had enough support from Prof. (Dr.) D. S. Kothari, Chairman, University Grants Commission, to hold the seminar. After the liberation of Bangladesh the whole complexion having changed the subjects for the International Seminar on Bangladesh had to be redrafted in co-operation with some scholars from Bangladesh. We owe our deep gratitude to the University Grants Commission which has kindly agreed to sponsor this International Seminar. The Calcutta University also deserves special mention for undertaking the responsibility of guiding the 4-day seminar.

I believe the Seminar will take into account the background of the liberation movement in Bangladesh, the glorious fight for liberation and its impact on the world community. The scholars participating in the Seminar from Bangladesh, India and Ceylon will, I believe, take into consideration the possibility of framing an outline of mutual co-operation of the countries in this underdeveloped region. The Seminar, I am sure, will open up the possibilities of mutual understanding and rapport between the intellectuals of different countries. The Seminar, I am sure, will take note of the impact of the Bangladesh liberation struggle on India. To my mind it appears that the gigantic forces released in the process of liberation struggle in Bangladesh will strengthen the base of secularism in India. The different communities living in India will perhaps in course of time feel more integrated within the body politic of India. The world community has witnessed for the first time that countries in the underdeveloped region can also move on a path of self-reliance with confidence and ultimate success. We have to preserve this faith in ourselves so that we can move ahead in co-operation with

other independent sovereign countries on the basis of mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's problems.

This Seminar, I believe, will take initiative to establish close co-operation amongst the intellectuals of Asiatic nations to realize the ideals of (1) Secularism, (2) Democracy, (3) Socialism, and (4) Panchseel.

We are afraid that it may not be possible to discuss all the themes exhaustively in one single seminar. May we not have follow-up seminars in Bangladesh, Bombay, Ceylon and other places?

On behalf of the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti I offer my sincerest welcome to all the guests from Bangladesh and Ceylon. I welcome Professor D. S. Kothari, Chairman, University Grants Commission, who will kindly inaugurate the Seminar. I welcome the guests from different Indian universities who have come all the way to participate in the Seminar. We have made some modest arrangements for their stay in Calcutta during the coming days. I can only hope that the experience of our guests in Calcutta will be pleasant and will help in fostering mutual understanding and rapport between our peoples. From every possible standpoint the Bangladesh freedom movement is unique in its own way. Initially it was the urge of a determined people to give expression to their cultural identity which was sought to be thwarted from time to time by the military forces of the ruling junta. Ultimately it took the shape of a total resistance against colonial exploitation which naturally succeeded in spite of a deep-laid conspiracy of some big powers in support of the exploiters. The movement did not intend to harm any body. The Bengalis only sought to live with human dignity and honour. It is the history of a brute force committing genocide on nearly three million unarmed and peace-loving people, destroying in the process whatever came in the way both in urban as also in rural areas. Only the future historians can tell that the ravages made in the surroundings of peaceful and quiet landscape of Bangladesh surpass all records of savagery and brutality. We have full faith that the people of Bangladesh will fight their battle for winning peace and reconstructing their country with as much determination as they fought their liberation battle. We in India vow to stand by them whenever needed in future.

Before I conclude, I think, I am obliged to record our gratitude to Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture and West Bengal College & University Teachers' Association for their generous and consistent support.

Thanks to all guests and participants.

D. S. KOTHARI

Inaugural Address

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to participate in this Seminar, I am grateful to the organizers of this Seminar, especially to my friend Dr. S. N. Sen, Prof. P. K. Bose and Prof. Dilip Chakravarty for asking me to inaugurate this Seminar. I will do so with great pleasure. But that does not mean that I am not aware of my limitations. Indeed my limitations are manifold and I cannot understand what to speak about. The thing that I feel most is that I am not a Bengali and I think that the Seminar you have should be in both Bengali and English. At this point I remember of the visit of a German Rector few years ago to join the discussions of several problems of common interest. At one stage a question was put, when the German delegate replied that he would answer the question not on that day, but next day, because the interpreter was at that stage of the conference absent. Our Indian delegates were a little surprised as to why an interpreter would be needed. The German Rector replied—"I want to answer the question from my heart and that I can do in German language only, and hence the need of an interpreter."

We must be very grateful for sponsoring such a Seminar under the auspices of the University of Calcutta and Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti. I think, the word "Sahayak" should be replaced by the word "Maitri", and this Samiti should be a Maitri Samiti. To our friend Prof. Dilip Chakravarty we are specially indebted; we owe much to him. We must thank our friends from Bangladesh which has emerged as a great new country through the freedom struggle that has few parallels in history. We all feel eager to share our thoughts, views and ideas about many challenges that lie ahead of us. We can learn from one another. We can strengthen our common feelings, commit to pursue the goals of socialism, peace, security and welfare of the people. The role of education in this context can be central.

Modern world is knowledge-based. Using the word "science" in its wider sense, knowledge is linked with productivity. That education is good to development of socialism needs no elaboration and that more science leads to technology and more improved productivity maximizes the possibility of more resources. S.T.P., i.e., Science, Technology and Productivity, in a special process can be subservient to wisdom and welfare of the people.

Let me digress for a moment. There is a big Hall in Delhi, called *Diwan-i-Khas*, and on a wall of this Hall a famous Persian couplet was inscribed three hundred years ago, describing it as a paradise. But that is totally a rejected place nowadays and has become a place of mere historical importance. At that time it was a paradise of an emperor. But it was not that kind of paradise that can serve as an ideal for the people and rightly therefore it has become a place of historical importance only.

When I mentioned of a paradise on earth, I could recollect what I read in a journal which referred to the growing misery and the challenges of increasing exploitation that man was facing owing to rapid rise in population. It is likely that after sometime the world may face such a colossal problem that it may suffer a catastrophe. It specially referred to the terrible rise in population in Calcutta, apprehending that at the end of this century Calcutta's population will be doubled, viz., about 150 lakhs. So rapid is the growth of population that there is hardly any time to meet this challenge. It is a matter of great shame and regret for the people of India that some parts of this great city are really abominable. There is no other way than to make full use of science and technology. But this calls for a radical change in education and attitude as well. Education, divorced from productivity, will not be able to meet the challenge we are facing.

The Western nations, i.e., the technically advanced countries, are in a rut and cannot easily get out of it. The technically advanced countries, being the masters of technology, are using and directing it not for welfare of the people. The peoples of India and Bangladesh should follow the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who have contributed to the world new forms of thinking, i.e., true love of mankind. By imitation of the advanced countries we will only worsen our problems instead of making any positive contribution to the world. Hence, what is most needed today is indigenous thinking, and in a Conference like this, we can discuss about our common problems and exchange ideas, and above all, can make a most valuable contribution which will strengthen us all to face the great challenge that we have.

Thanking you for giving me a patient hearing.

কামরুজ্জামান

বক্তৃতা

আজকের এই সেমিনারে বক্তৃতা দেওয়ার কথা আমি আগে জানতাম না কাজেই আমি সে জন্য আগে থেকে প্রস্তুত ছিলাম না। তবে এই মহতী সভায় কিছু বলার সুযোগ পেয়ে আমি নিজেকে ধন্য মনে করছি। আজকের এই সভায় বক্তৃতা করার আহ্বান যখন আমি পেলাম তখন অদূর অতীতের কতগুলি ছবি আমার মনে ছায়া ফেলল, যখন প্রথম নয় মাস আগে আমরা আমাদের ভারতীয় বন্ধুদের কাছে উপস্থিত হয়েছিলাম এবং বাঁচার জন্য আমরা তাঁদের আশ্রয় নিয়েছিলাম, সেই অন্ধকারময় দিনগুলির কথা আমার মনে পড়ল। আমাদের ভবিষ্যৎ আজ কী হবে সেদিন আমরা স্পষ্ট করে জানতাম না। গত এপ্রিলের প্রথম সপ্তাহে আমরা এখানে আসতে আরম্ভ করি, লক্ষ লক্ষ জনসাধারণের সঙ্গে আমাদের শিশু-বৃদ্ধ-যুবকেরা এই দেশে আসতে আরম্ভ করে। তখন আমরা জানতে পারি যে, এই বাংলার সকল স্তরের এবং মতের মানুষ আমাদের এখানে আসতে দিয়েছে এবং তার জন্য যথাসাধ্য সাহায্য করেছে। তা না হলে আমাদের মুক্তিসংগ্রামকে আমরা এমনভাবে সুসংগঠিত করতে পারতাম না। শুধু তাই নয়, আমরা যখন অসহায় বোধ করেছি তখন তাঁরা আমাদের আশা দিয়েছেন। একথা কি আমরা কখনও ভুলতে পারি? বিশেষ করে অধ্যাপক দিলীপ চক্রবর্তী আমাদের প্রতি এমন বন্ধুত্ব দেখিয়েছেন যার জন্য আমরা চিরকাল তাঁর কাছে কৃতজ্ঞ থাকব। কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় বাংলাদেশ সহায়ক সমিতির চেষ্টাতেই বাংলাদেশ শিক্ষক সমিতি আমরা সংগঠন করতে পেরেছিলাম, এর আগে যার কল্পনাও আমরা করতে পারতাম না। এই সমিতির পক্ষ থেকে আমি এটা বলতে পারি যে, এর কার্যকলাপ রূপে আমরা যে বাংলাদেশের বাস্তবায়িত শিক্ষকদের জন্য একটা জীবিকার কথাই কেবল চিন্তা করেছিলাম তা নয়, তাদের প্রতি আমাদের অন্যান্য কর্তব্য পালনের চেষ্টাও আমরা করেছি। যে ক্যাম্প স্কুলগুলি তখন স্থাপিত হয়েছিল তার কথা দিলীপবাবু তাঁর রিপোর্টে উল্লেখ করেছেন। এখানে ছাত্রদের কৈতামাফিক পরীক্ষা নিয়ে সার্টিফিকেট দেওয়ার কথা তখন আমরা ভাবিনি। ক্যাম্প জীবনের অভিশাপ আমরা দেখেছি, অনেকের সেখানে মৃত্যু হয়েছে।

সেখানকার যুবকদের মুক্তিযুদ্ধে পাঠানো এবং তাদের প্রেরণা দেওয়ার কথাও আমরা চিন্তা করেছি। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে শিক্ষকদের দায়িত্ব পালনের কথাও আমরা চিন্তা করেছি। বিদেশেও অনেকে গিয়েছেন। কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় বাংলাদেশ সহায়ক সমিতির সাহায্য ছাড়া আমরা এই সব কাজ করতে পারতাম না। এর জন্য ভারতের জনসাধারণ এবং ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী বিশেষ করে পশ্চিম বাংলার জনসাধারণ যে ত্যাগস্বীকার করেছেন তার জন্য কৃতজ্ঞতা প্রকাশ না করলে আমাদের অন্যায্য হবে।

পশ্চিম বাংলার জনসাধারণ সেদিন যেন আমাদের বুকে তুলে নিয়েছিলেন। আমাদের স্বাধীনতায়ুদ্ধে, মুক্তিযুদ্ধে ভারতীয় জওয়ানেরা বাংলাদেশের মাটিতে রক্ত দিয়েছে। আমাদের দুই নেণের এই রক্তের সম্পর্ক চিরদিনের। এই সম্পর্ক কখনও ভাঙতে পারে না যদিও সকলেই জানেন একে ভাঙার জন্য নানা স্বার্থান্ধ মহল থেকে ষড়যন্ত্র চালানো হচ্ছে। তবু এই সম্পর্ক যে চিরস্থায়ী হবে সে বিশ্বাস আমাদের আছে। ভারতের জওয়ানেরা বাংলাদেশে যে-ব্যবহার দেখিয়ে এসেছেন তাতে আমাদের জনসাধারণ মুগ্ধ হয়েছেন। আমাদের লোকেদের মনে একটা ভ্রান্ত ধারণা সৃষ্টি করা হয়েছিল যে, ভারতের জওয়ানেরা হয়তো অনেক দিন বাংলাদেশে থাকবে। কিন্তু তারা সেখান থেকে চলে এসেছে। তারা চলে আসার পরে আমাদের দেশরক্ষার দায়িত্ব আমাদের উপরে পড়েছে। আজকে দেশ স্বাধীন হয়েছে, শত্রু দেশ থেকে বিতাড়িত হয়েছে। বৃদ্ধ, যুবক, ছাত্র, শ্রমিক কৃষক, সকলের উপরেই অত্যাচার হয়েছিল। ভারতের জওয়ানেরা ঢাকায় প্রবেশ করার প্রাক্কালে সেখানকার বুদ্ধিজীবীদের হত্যা করা হয়েছিল। আমাদের জাতীয় ঐক্য এবং ঐক্যবদ্ধ মুক্তিযুদ্ধের জন্য আমরা জয় লাভ করেছি। এখন আমাদের অন্য এক সংগ্রাম শুরু হয়েছে। এই সংগ্রাম হানাদারদের বিতাড়িত করার চেয়ে কম গুরুত্বপূর্ণ নয়। এটা দেশগঠন এবং জাতিগঠনের সংগ্রাম। এই সংগ্রামের জন্যও যদি রক্ত দেওয়ার প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলেও আমার দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস আমাদের দেশের ছাত্র এবং যুবকেরা এগিয়ে আসবে।

আবার আমাদের নবলব্ধ স্বাধীনতার বিবুদ্ধে যে কোন ষড়যন্ত্র চলছে না তা নয়। সেখানকার ল অ্যাণ্ড অর্ডারের কথা আপনারা হয়তো শুনছেন। তবে এটুকু বলতে পারি যে, আমরা দ্রুত গতিতে এগিয়ে চলছি। লক্ষ লক্ষ লোকের হাতে যে-সব অস্ত্রশস্ত্র দেওয়া হয়েছিল সেগুলি ফেরত পেতে অবশ্য কিছু সময় লাগবে।

আমরা এমন এক নেতাকে পেয়েছি যার সাহস এবং ত্যাগ আছে এবং যার কথা দেশের লোকেরা মানে। সেই জন্য শান্তিশৃঙ্খলা স্থাপনের দিকে আমরা দ্রুত এগিয়ে যাচ্ছি। ষড়যন্ত্র যে হতে পারে সে কথা আমাদের নেতাও জানেন। হানাদারেরা কী ভাবে গ্রামের পর গ্রাম পুড়িয়ে ধ্বংস করে দিয়েছিল তা আপনারা সকলেই জানেন। সেখানে স্বাভাবিক অবস্থা ফিরিয়ে আনতে আমাদের টাকা পয়সা, পুলিশ বা সৈন্যবাহিনী কিছুই লাগেনি। আমাদের সরকার যেভাবে কাজ করে যাচ্ছেন এবং জনসাধারণ তার সঙ্গে যেভাবে সহযোগিতা করছে তাতে অতিসত্বরই আমরা উন্নতির দিকে এগিয়ে যাব বলে বিশ্বাস করি।

আজকের এই সেমিনারের প্রয়োজনীয়তা আমরা উপলব্ধি করেছি। ঢাকায় এই সেমিনারের পরবর্তী অধিবেশন করার যে-কথা দিলীপবাবু বলেছেন তা যদি আমরা করতে

পারি তাহলে আমাদের নিজেদের মধ্যে ভাবের আদানপ্রদান খুব ভালো হবে। কাজেই এই প্রস্তাবকে আমরা সর্বাঙ্গিকরণে সমর্থন করছি। কী করে এগোলে ভালো হবে সে সম্বন্ধে আমরা নিজেদের মধ্যে আলোচনা করে সিদ্ধান্ত নেব। আমি আপনাদের ধন্যবাদ জানাচ্ছি। ১৯৪৭ সনের পরে আমরা বাঙ্গালীরা দুইভাগে বিভক্ত হয়ে ছিলাম। তার পরে গত বছর নয় মাস আমরা এখানে আপনাদের আতিথেয়তা লাভ করেছিলাম। আগে এখানকার সম্বন্ধে আমাদের মধ্যে বিবৃপ ধারণা সুকৌশলে সৃষ্টি করানো হয়েছিল, আমাদের নয় মাস বাসের সময় তা ভুল প্রতিপন্ন হয়েছে। আপনারা তখন আমাদের যে-সমর্থন এবং সাহায্য করেছিলেন তাতে বৃদ্ধিতে পেরেছি যে, বাঙ্গালীরা একই মনের অধিকারী। দুইভাগে বিভক্ত হলেও স্বাধীনতা যুদ্ধের ভিতর দিয়ে আমরা পরস্পরের অনেক নিকটে এসেছি। আশা করি আমাদের এই মিলন গভীর ও দীর্ঘস্থায়ী হবে। এই সেমিনারের উদ্যোক্তাদের ধন্যবাদ জানাচ্ছি এবং এই সেমিনারের প্রয়োজনীয়তা মুক্তকণ্ঠে স্বীকার করছি। এই সেমিনার যিনি উদ্বোধন করেছেন সেই ড. কোঠারীকে আমি আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ জানাচ্ছি। জয় বাংলা, জয় হিন্দ।

Mr. Mazaharul Islam summarized the speech of Mr. Quamruzzaman in English.

I WILL try to reproduce what Mr. Quamruzzaman said.

When I received the invitation for this Seminar I was very much happy that I would be able to come over here again and at the same time I could remember how I had to escape from my country because of the atrocities of the Pakistani army and how I got shelter in this great country, India. I also remember the hospitality of the members of Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti. We are very much grateful to them because this Sahayak Samiti has done a lot for us. They have not only provided shelter for a good number of teachers coming from Bangladesh, but also this Sahayak Samiti has tried to provide maintenance to many of the teachers. Over and above, the Sahayak Samiti did two additional things. Firstly, about 51 camp schools were started and our teachers were sent to run those schools. Secondly, this Sahayak Samiti tried with utmost sincerity to popularize the freedom movement and also to support the freedom fighters, as also to get support from all over the world. We also are very grateful to the great leader of India, Sm. Indira Gandhi, and specially to the people of West Bengal, who in spite of their manifold problems provided shelter to few lakhs of people from Bangladesh. In this connexion, Mr. Quamruzzaman also expressed his gratitude to the soldiers of India who joined their hands with the freedom fighters of Bangladesh and liberated our great country. The people of Bangladesh are grateful to the Indian soldiers because of sympathetic behaviour to them. There was an apprehension that the

Indian soldiers would stay for a long time in Bangladesh but that has been proved to be false.

Mr. Quamruzzaman also mentioned about the conspiracy, especially of the big powers, just to create some sort of misunderstanding between the people of India and Bangladesh. He assured that that sort of conspiracy would never be allowed to gain footing in Bangladesh, because he was very much confident about the tautness of the friendship between India and Bangladesh.

In conclusion Mr. Quamruzzaman said that the first phase of our struggle was over and we were already in the second phase, viz., reconstruction of our country. Our people are working and we solicit help from the people of India and all over the world for the right cause. We have a great leader in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Seventy-five million people are standing behind him, and we hope, we shall be able to solve our problems. We have great problems, especially in the field of education and economic reconstruction and communication, and we hope, with the strong spirit of our people we shall be able to solve our problems.

About this Seminar Mr. Quamruzzaman expressed that the purpose of this Seminar is really very great and we are happy that we have been able to assemble here to discuss many problems, as well as the freedom struggle of Bangladesh, and he was one with the opinion of Prof. Dilip Chakravarty that this Seminar should be followed up in Bangladesh, Ceylon and other adjoining countries. Before conclusion, Mr. Quamruzzaman expressed that it was not possible for us to come to India, but that artificial wall is no longer there and we shall be able to come closer day by day.

Lastly, as Mr. Quamruzzaman did, let me also express my gratitude to the organizers of this Seminar and the educationists who have come from different parts of India and Ceylon.

NIRMAL PERERA

I AM indeed honoured to have been requested by Prof. Dilip Chakravarty to address this learned assembly. It is a matter of great pride and satisfaction that we had our share in the recognition of Bangladesh as an independent sovereign state. Ceylon and Bangladesh, especially the Singhalees of Ceylon, have indeed a valuable association. The Singhalees believe that Prince Vijay Singha came to Ceylon with his banished friends and founded the Singhalee nation. But from 500 B.C. to 1972 A.D. scholars have been trying to prove this baseless. But scholarship is always blurred, and the Singhalees believe that they are the part of the Bengalis.

In 1930 the people of Ceylon achieved the universal right to vote, and it was not long after that our ties with Bengal were cemented. Rabindranath Tagore visited Ceylon in 1935. I was then a small child, but I distinctly remember the enormous mass meeting he addressed. Referring to winning the right to vote, he said that democracy must not fail in India and Ceylon. In a resounding voice he said : "Democracy is like my 'Chitra', it is a power of the weak and a weapon of the unarmed hand." In this context, we believe that the international community must recognize the decision of the people of Bangladesh by ballot. We believe that this is a necessary commitment for the establishment of peace.

We in Ceylon pressed for a solution of the problem of Bangladesh, and also for the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the elected head of the people of Bangladesh. This will give you some idea of our association with the freedom struggle in Bangladesh. I express my gratitude to Prof. Dilip Chakravarty but for whose letters the people of Ceylon would never have been aware of the butchery perpetrated by the Pakistani Army in Bangladesh. He is a man of vision who sees the goal and he sees the goal with no difficulty. We have also all reverence for Dr. Kothari. Our Institute decided to support the call of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for a free and independent state. We made this clear on many platforms. On the morning of 27th March last year, we got the news that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been taken to custody, but it was taken as a rumour. But the Governing Body of our Institute met and decided to diffuse our feelings. We have our feelings. We have our scholars, farmers, teachers and workers in every field, and we wanted to carry the cry for a free Bangladesh. Then we started our correspondence with Prof. Dilip Chakravarty, and since then we have never looked back.

Ceylonese have a long tradition. Democracy asserted itself in Ceylon long ago. In 307 B.C. Emperor Asoka sent his son, Mahendra, to Ceylon to preach Buddhism, and that was the day when the field of democracy was prepared in Ceylon. Whenever necessary, we count

upon the faith of Buddhism. We have found time and again that we may be threatened by danger, but by the teachings of Buddhism, we never fail. We do not believe in the gun-plot diplomacy of the Seventh Fleet, and we knew that the Fleet did not move to deliver diplomatic goods; the reasoning in support of its movement in Bay of Bengal was a massive irrelevance. We started a campaign and invited eminent personages to address public meetings. We were horrified at the attitude of our Government. We made it plain to our people that in the establishment of the rights of the people all the nations have equal claim. As you have heard just now, the world is on the brink of catastrophe and hence the time has come to think together and to work together for the common good of the people. Now that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has taken oath as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, we hope, the people of Bangladesh, after the successful freedom struggle, will work together for the reconstruction of their country. In this connexion, I like to quote a few lines from a poem entitled, "Fort of Lalbag" by Faruk Ahmed, as translated by Dr. Kabir Choudhury in *Bangladesh Academy Journal* :

"The sharp sword of time has made on you
Its relentless descent,
. . . and yet death and decay have failed
To besmear you with infamy or disgrace,
From the shore of the dawn of freedom
I see your glorious visage . . ."

And as Walt Whitman says :

"I overcome death with the dying,
The birth with the new-washed babe"

But I should mention one important thing which we experienced in Ceylon. It was decided that Singhalee, being the mother tongue, should be made the medium of learning. It was not felt necessary that English, being the international language, should be given equal push. I had been to Dacca and I saw that the students felt somewhat diffident to attend the lectures as those were to be delivered in English. We have suffered much for this in Ceylon. At one time no youth could get any job because he was lacking in knowledge in English. However, the Government gradually came to their senses. I, therefore, request you to consider the expediency of giving equal stress on English in Bangladesh.

I thank you all for kindly giving me a patient hearing.

P. K. BOSE

Presidential Address

DR. S. N. SEN is the President of Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti and he conducted the functions of this Samiti and used to go into the details of the workings of this Samiti. It was in the fitness of the things that he should have presided over this inaugural function. But due to his illness it has not possible for him to come over here.

However, on behalf of Calcutta University I welcome you all today in this International Seminar on Bangladesh, especially the scientists from Bangladesh. In the last Indian Science Congress in Calcutta many scientists came and stayed here and exchanged their thoughts, visited the laboratories, inspected scientific books and journals. Hence, it is the second occasion when the academicians and scientists have again come here and Calcutta University is welcoming them. On my behalf and on behalf of Calcutta University, I welcome the delegates from Bangladesh and Ceylon and other Universities in India to deliberate in this International Seminar.

To Dr. Kothari I must say a few words. I do not know why Dr Kothari has some soft corner for this University which is not passing through peaceful time during the last 4 or 5 years. From time to time we had to meet him and he had been generous enough to help us. Now, about 8/10 months ago in the meetings in Delhi, he used to enquire of us about the news of Bangladesh, the problems of refugees, arrangements made for the trainees and temporary teachers and how the different Universities could help in this problem. He has always been very sympathetic towards the affairs of Bangladesh and, it is in the fitness of the things,

he has been requested to inaugurate this International Seminar and he is kind enough to do so. I also welcome him today.

I am one of the office-bearers of Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti and hence I like to say a few words. The Report of Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti is out and Prof. Dilip Chakravarty has also made a statement. In addition to what has been stated and printed, I only like to add as to why Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti chose this particular sector as their sphere of activity when about one crore of refugees came here. We felt that we should choose this particular sphere, viz., education, and imparted some training to the camp boys, sought to rehabilitate the teachers, made arrangements for the young teachers to work in scientific laboratories so that their knowledge might be enriched and when they would go back their knowledge could be profitably utilized. We voluntarily chose this particular sphere but I would not say that we have done very well; we have done at best a part of the job which we accepted on behalf of the country.

About this International Seminar, I should say that it is always very good to exchange our ideas, especially with the teachers and academicians from Bangladesh. A large number of administrators, including the Prime Minister and the President of Bangladesh, as also about 85% of the teachers were the students of this University. We have been receiving letters from many organizations, and many have expressed the desire that they are willing to come to this University and stay with us and exchange ideas. A group of statesmen from Bangladesh will be visiting India and we have requested them through the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India to pay a visit to Calcutta University and they have accepted the invitation.

We have always tried our level best for the exchange of technical personnel, and exchange of our views at the University level or at the college level. Prof. Huda stayed here for 10 days and he was so moved that he expressed his desire to come here again and stay for a long time.

Though the country is separated, we hope, through this Seminar our connexion with Bangladesh will be more and more close. I wish this Seminar all success and thank you all for attending this Seminar.

PRESENTATION OF CHEQUE

Sri H. N. Majumdar : On behalf of the Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti I would request Dr. Kothari to offer a cheque of Rs. 50,000.00 to Mr. Quamruzzaman M.C.A. for handing it over to Mr. Yusuf Ali, Education Minister, Bangladesh, to help the students who participated in the freedom movement.

Dr. D. S. Kothari : It is really a great pleasure and privilege for me to offer this cheque to the students of Bangladesh.

Prof. J. N. Chatterjee : We are particularly grateful to Dr. Kothari, an eminent educationist of our country, and also to other scholars who have come to attend the Seminar from different parts of this country, Bangladesh and Ceylon, as also to the guests who have honoured us by attending this Seminar.

জনাব কামরুজ্জামান : একটু আগে বাংলাদেশের মুক্তিযোদ্ধা এবং তাঁদের পরিবারের সাহায্যার্থে আপনারা যে পঞ্চাশ হাজার টাকার চেক দিয়েছেন তা আমি বাংলাদেশের পক্ষ থেকে কৃতজ্ঞতার সঙ্গে গ্রহণ করছি। এই প্রসঙ্গে আমি বাংলাদেশ সরকার, তার শিক্ষামন্ত্রী এবং বাংলাদেশের জনসাধারণের পক্ষ থেকে আপনাদের কাছে তাঁদের এবং আমার নিজের গভীর কৃতজ্ঞতা প্রকাশ করছি। ধন্যবাদ।

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PART TWO

PAPERS

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AMLAN DATTA

Bangladesh : A Renaissance with a Difference

It is not an accident that the Pak army occupation of Bangladesh began with a savage attack on the highest seats of learning in the land, nor is it again mere coincidence that an unprecedented butchery of intellectuals and writers was the last desperate act of that army before it formally surrendered. Bangladesh cannot be understood except in its proper cultural setting. The place that poets and philosophers came to occupy in the struggle for independence of Bangladesh should give pause to those who do not see in it anything more than a particularly bitter conflict of provincial animosities. There was a principle of selection behind the atrocities perpetrated by the Pak army which needs explanation in special terms. That the political aspirations of Bangladesh were fortified by economic injustice suffered at the hands of the ruling faction of Pakistan is well known. What needs to be specially understood is that the movement led by the Bangabandhu was more than a mere contest for political power buttressed by economic issues, that it gave voice and expression to a cultural renaissance from which it derives its distinctive character.

It is useful at this point to hark back to the nineteenth-century renaissance in Bengal. With the introduction of English education in this country and in face of the challenge of Western and Christian ideas, the more sensitive leaders of the new educated middle class were confronted with a crisis of identity. Since this middle class was composed chiefly of Hindus, the Western impact produced a crisis of conviction within Hinduism. This ancient religion carried with it then, as it continues to do now, an impressive accumulation of tribal forms of

worship and corresponding beliefs. The leaders of the nineteenth-century renaissance could not help asking themselves if they were Hindus by conviction; and if so, in what sense. In attempting to answer this question, many of them were led to define the fundamentals of their faith in universalistic terms. Rammohan, whose bicentenary we should be celebrating soon, reached the conclusion that "the inclination of each sect of mankind towards certain nuclear forms of worship or devotion" was an incidental appendage and that the great religions of the world agreed among themselves in their moral core which consisted in service to man. It was typical of the leaders of the Bengali renaissance from Rammohan to Rabindranath that they accepted and preached a religion of humanism without renouncing their local heritage.

The Muslim middle class in Bengal in the earlier part of this century was relatively small even in the eastern region, now called Bangladesh, where the followers of this faith formed a majority of the population. The reasons for the delayed introduction of English education among them are well known and I shall not discuss them here. In the 1920s a movement was launched by Muslim intellectuals at Dacca under the banner of "emancipation of the intellect" ("buddhi muktir andolan"). The ideas adopted by the leaders of this movement bore a family resemblance to the Bengali renaissance which had found a culmination in Rabindranath. Abul Fazl, one of the leaders of the Dacca-centred renaissance, came to the conclusion that "true devotion to culture requires that we rise above parochial and communal prejudice." However, this movement remained predictably weak before partition.

After partition a very large part of the Hindu middle class left East Bengal. There was now a vacuum to be filled up and the Muslim middle class rapidly grew in size. Conditions were soon created for a cultural ferment. The historical context was different. But the educated Bengalis of what was then East Pakistan were confronted with a crisis of identity which was at least as sharp as what had been experienced by an earlier generation after the British conquest of Bengal. Many of them had worked for the partition. In that sense they had accepted Islam as the basis of nationhood. Yet the major fact of experience in East Pakistan in the post-partition period was the oppression of one section of Muslims by another. At this hour of crisis of conscience, East Pakistan turned to its Bengali heritage. But the new Bengali middle class, and through it the people of East Bengal, could achieve a new synthesis of Islam and the culture of Bengal only by rejecting a narrow and exclusivist view of religion and adopting a wider outlook. In the process the intellectuals of East Bengal, including the new generation of students, gave rise to a cultural renaissance within Muslim society for which parallels do not exist elsewhere in this sub-continent.

Not a few people have been so surprised by this upsurge of a secular

and democratic movement in Bangladesh that they cannot put trust in its reality and regard it with much scepticism. They find this rapid change in the outlook of a people incomprehensible. But what has taken place is not after all so difficult to understand provided one tries to understand it with sympathy. The people of Bangladesh have been taught by a force more powerful than mere propaganda; they have been taught by history. The rulers of Pakistan used communal riots as a weapon for breaking up the unity of the language movement in Bangladesh. The leaders of this movement had to oppose these riots as the only way of saving their struggle for cultural self-determination from total defeat. A new tradition of martyrdom was created in the process. The idea that "true dedication to culture demands that we rise above communal prejudice" ceased to be merely quotable words; it became a message of history as lived by a new generation of Bangladesh people.

In the process Bangladesh set an example from which the people of India should have much to learn. There are two different aspects of the matter one could briefly touch upon in this connexion. First, there is the communal question. In Bangladesh the Muslims share a common language with their Hindu brethren. In most other parts of India, they have a separate language of their own, namely, Urdu. This has now proved to be a decisive difference. It has made Bangladesh Muslims the leaders of a new experiment in nation-building. Islam in Bangladesh has grown local roots. In the process of striking local roots, of coming to terms with a language which belongs equally to different religious communities and, moreover, has been the vehicle of a significant cultural renaissance and expressed its humanist message, Islam in this part of the sub-continent has undergone a transformation which makes it today a source of despair for religious bigots and of hope for others.

Bangladesh has opened up new horizons in yet another way. The nineteenth-century Bengali renaissance was mainly confined to a small urban *élite*. Its influence on rural Bengal was minimal. It introduced a dual culture with very little interaction between its two parts. Moreover, the "practical" content of this upper-class culture was very limited. In these respects, the movement in Bangladesh has a somewhat different character. Although Dacca is a big enough city to provide a unifying centre for the culture of East Bengal, it is in fact middle-sized by comparison with Calcutta. While the cultural *élite* of Calcutta is by now separated by a distance of several generations from their previous incarnation in rural Bengal, there is not the same yawning gap between a great many leaders of Bangladesh and the land from which they spring. There is also a second difference. The older movement had to pass through a much longer period of dissociation from political power and positive responsibilities for building the nation. The movement in

Bangladesh is comparatively much younger, yet already vested with positive responsibilities.

All these should make it easier for the new renaissance to develop a positive content. If, for instance, Bangladesh can begin this new chapter of her history with an educational system which provides for closer links between the cultivation of learning and the development of the material resources of the country, if young educated Bengalis come forward in sufficient numbers to fill up the gaps in industrial leadership arising from the departure of the Pakistanis, if people who once joined the Mukti Bahini now turn their patriotic energy to the task of carrying through the "green revolution" and so make Sonar Bangla in reality more like what it is in song, then indeed the younger movement will be the teacher of the old and Bangladesh in overcoming her own crisis will also be helping the other Bengal overcome hers.

But it may not turn out all that favourably. Bangladesh had to go through hell to gain her independence. Things can now improve only gradually. The youth of Bangladesh have bravely and willingly paid a great price to make the country free. But this itself might create a variety of problems. These problems are partly psychological. When the youth are called upon to make an extraordinary sacrifice, they are apt to expect from it equally great and visible results. And they are liable to be impatient. Hopes turn sour in no time unless they are sustained by qualities other than mere bravery. Bangladesh having gained her freedom might still be wrecked by an impatient revolutionism. Precisely because the secular and democratic movement is so young there, it might be quickly undone by an adverse turn of events.

We have still to hope that this will not happen. Bangladesh is fortunate in having Mujib at the helm of affairs. More than anybody else he has the ability to lead the country through hard times while keeping hopes alive. Thanks to his presence and the other assets of which we spoke earlier, the new renaissance in Bangladesh may still triumph over the forces ranged against it.

M. MANIRUZZAMAN MIA

Violation of Human Rights and Genocide in Bangladesh

IT WAS the night between March 25 and 26, 1971; it was the grisliest night the Bengali nation has ever known.

The forces of evil let loose by the Army rulers of Pakistan continued, for nine months at a stretch, the holocaust begun on March 25 with ever increasing intensity each day using newer and ghastlier methods of extermination of the Bengalis. It is not my intention, however, to recount here the acts of brutality perpetrated by the Pakistani marauders during that period. For, it is not pleasant to ruminate on such brutal scenes as bustee people being felled by swarms of bullets while coming out, screaming, of their tenements set ablaze by flamethrowers; or the still body of Sujit, a Dacca University student, in a pool of blood holding fast his mother's letter asking him, in view of the troubled situation, to return to his village home; or the mutilated corpse of the old and infirm gatekeeper of the Dacca University Women's Hall, Nani Rajbhor, who while asleep was shot dead at a point-blank range with the corner of his mosquito net lifted; or the dead body of Moju Mia of Jinjira and that of his baby boy nestling in his father's breast both of whom were killed, while running for life, by a single bullet piercing through their backs. The history of liberation of Bangladesh is replete with hundreds of thousands of similar acts of brutality of which these are but a few examples. Thanks to the world press that many such stories have been carried to the farthest corner of the globe.

While the incidents of 'kill, loot and rape' in Bangladesh are tragic in themselves, more tragic is the fact that in their bid to 'crush' the Bengali nation, the Pakistani army have thrown to the winds all the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which Pakistan herself is a signatory. The Declaration very solemnly declares that the "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." (Preamble, Universal Declaration of Human Rights) But was the dignity of man respected by the Punjabi soldiers for whom Bengalis and bastards were synonymous? Was it respected when teachers were threatened with dire consequences if they indulged in 'loose talks'? Was it respected when some Dacca University teachers were humiliated day in and day out for nearly three months in a concentration camp? Was it respected when prisoners used to be double-marched to the latrine, given only 30 seconds to evacuate the stomach and come out? Was it respected when a man was killed for his failure to recite the Kalema?

The Human Rights Declaration envisages a world "in which human being shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear." (Preamble, U.D.H.R.) About freedom of speech, the less said the better, for there has never been any freedom of speech in the entire history of Pakistan. This is too well known to be elaborated on. About freedom of belief, would it not be sufficient to note that three million people of Bangladesh have sacrificed their lives at the altar of their belief in a democratic and secular political order and in a just and equitable society free from all sorts of exploitation of man by man? Needless to mention also that an all-pervasive fear, and not freedom from it, engulfed each and every Bengali during the occupation period. It was because of fear that Purna Chandra Dutta, a Dacca University lecturer, assumed a Muslim name through an affidavit in the Court; so did other members of his family. After the liberation all of them have forsaken their adopted Muslim names. It was because of fear of the advancing army that Azizunnessa of Vikrampur choked her new-born baby, unintentionally though, to death so that the baby might not cry out and betray her presence to the killers. To epitomize all, was it not because of fear that 10 million people of Bangladesh took refuge in this country?

The pogrom that was begun by the Pakistani army on March 25 and continued with ever increasing ferocity till the liberation of Bangladesh completely negates Article 3 of the Human Rights Declaration which grants everyone "the right to life, liberty, and security of person". The provision of Article 5 of the Declaration that "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment", has also been totally flouted. I was told by a friend of mine, who was in a concentration camp, about a Hindu prisoner who used to perform 'namaz' five times a



day like the Muslims because he could escape torture only during these prayer times. I know about a college professor who was inhumanly tortured to confess that he had raped several non-Bengali women during the non-co-operation movement in March.

Article 9 of the Declaration enjoins that "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest and exile." Facts, however, are to the contrary. In reality, all the arrests of thousands of men, young and old, were made arbitrarily and the detainees were never given any reasons for their arrests although Article 9 Section (2) of the draft Covenant on political and civil rights states clearly that "anyone who is arrested shall be informed at the time of arrest of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charges against him." Mr. Kamruddin Ahmed, an ex-Ambassador and Mr. Fazlul Karim, Cultural Officer of the Bengali Academy, Dacca, among others, were sent to the jail by an administrative order of six months' imprisonment without any trial in the court of law. Each one of the above mentioned incidents could be multiplied indefinitely. In fact, the provisions of all the 30 articles of the Human Rights Declaration have been trampled under foot and what has happened in Bangladesh has transgressed all norms of civilized behaviour and decency and is a complete negation of human values and conscience.

But the violation of human rights so persistently followed during the 9 months of occupation is but a part, indeed an insignificant part, of the whole story. More important is the fact that the 'master race', from the Punjab Plains, executed a well-planned scheme of genocide in Bangladesh, the magnitude of which has transcended all records of known history. Flashing back one could see how indiscriminate the massacre was : a person would be killed because he is a stout young man and is a potential Mukti Fauj ; another, because he is an educated man and is likely to give revolutionary ideas to the society ; third, because he is one of the rabble and therefore must have taken part in anti-government demonstrations ; fourth, because he is 'reported' to have given shelter to Mukti Bahini ; fifth, because he is a Hindu and therefore an Indian spy ; sixth, because his movements were suspicious ; seventh, because if no other pretext is available, he is a Bengali after all (is not that enough to kill a person ?) ; and so on and so forth.

On a closer study, a few facts emerge out of the appalling human disaster that overtook the 'down trodden race' (Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters*) of Bangladesh. Firstly, Hindus, as a religious community, have been discriminated against during the entire period of genocide ; barring a few exceptions, they have been eliminated wherever found, their houses burnt, property looted and temples destroyed. Conditions of life having been made intolerable for them, those who could escape the first onslaught had either fled the country or were wandering from place to place within Bangladesh herself. Even such humble classes of peoples



among the Hindus as sweepers and scavengers could be hardly found in occupied Bangladesh. Secondly, students were another major group among the Bengalis who were inevitable targets of the army. Not only were two Dacca University students' residential Halls raided on the 25th March and all the students therein killed but, at a later date, the 'saviours of Pakistan' felled the banyan tree in the courtyard of Dacca University Arts Faculty under the shade of which students used to hold meetings. Tikka's men were half way through the destruction of Madhu's restaurant, rendezvous of the students of Dacca University, when somebody stopped them by saying that the building was the birth place of the Muslim League. Thirdly, two other groups of people with whom the Pakistani army went berserk were the EPR Jawans and the Police, the only among the Bengalis who had some kind of fire arms in their hands. Fourthly, the urban proletariat and the village folk having no political affiliation at all could not also escape the wrath of the army. The villagers suffered most at the later stages of the army operation.

Lastly, though not of the least importance, is the systematic elimination of the intelligentsia in Bangladesh : teachers, doctors, engineers, writers, journalists, lawyers, etc. Dacca University teachers, among others, seem to have been 'specially' treated by the Punjabis : the genocide in Bangladesh began, as it were, with the cold-blooded murder of Dacca University teachers on March 26 and came to an end with the elimination of 9 others (and the University doctor), on the eve of liberation on December 14. If Farman Ali's grand strategy would have succeeded one knows not how many would we have lost in the process. For, it appears that he had made out a blue-print of the wholesale elimination of the teachers, students and all men with ideas in Bangladesh. The plan only began to be executed when, thanks to General Maneckshaw, the Indian army reached Dacca.

One keeps on asking as to why the army rulers of Pakistan should have resorted to this wanton destruction of life and property, arson, loot and rape. It should be remembered in this regard that many times in the past also they took to arms, albeit, on a limited scale. In 1971 the Punjabi vested interests threw off their masquerade and came out in their true colours as in the landslide victory of the Awami League in the 1970 election they could sense the end of their exploitation of this region. Therefore, they used their bullets as a last bid, to nullify the ballot, and thereby to 'ensure' what they call 'complete and absolute integrity of Pakistan' (Yahya Khan on March 6, 1971), which in simple terms means the continued colonial exploitation of Bangladesh by the Punjabis.

The pernicious racial prejudice of the ruling coterie of West Pakistan is no less responsible for the senseless killing of the innocent people of Bangladesh. No better evidence of the supposed 'racial superiority' of



the West Pakistanis over the Bengalis is available than some statements in the political autobiography of Ayub Khan, one-time President of Pakistan. This gentleman, while glorifying the various traits of the character of the people of West Pakistan in his book, paints the people of Bangladesh as those descending directly from the aboriginal Indian tribes, and therefore, by implication, are stunted intellectually and are uncivilized. For him, the Bengalis have always been under the domination of others and therefore are psychologically incapable of being their own masters. (Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters*, p. 187) Imagine the President of a country being so scornful of the majority of his own people! This outlook is typical of a large section of the West Pakistani people. And no wonder, that the 'master race' from the West would exercise their natural right to treat the 'slaves' the way they like!

In their attempt to annihilate the Bengali nation the army was able to enlist the support of a handful of people belonging to the Jammāt-i-Islami and the Muslim League by raising the bogey of Indian domination and whipping up the frenzy of religious communalism and cultural separatism. There are also evidences that suggest the involvement and complicity of a big power in the most heinous ever crime against humanity committed by the Pakistani army.

Two generals of that big power made a secret visit to Bangladesh weeks before March 1971; the ambassador of that country also paid clandestine visits to Dacca several times between January and March. He is reported to have asked for a military base in the Bay of Bengal which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is said to have turned down. This is supposed to have enraged the diplomat and the rulers of his country. The big power in question was probably the only country that could restrain the Yahya-Tikka gang from committing genocide in Bangladesh. It did not, in utter disregard of the opinion of the people of that country in favour of the oppressed millions of Bangladesh. Then again, this particular country made some sinister military movements to aid the retreating Pakistani army during the December war. This country is also known to have been involved in the massacre of a million people in another Southeast Asian country a few years ago.

Let us recall here the definition of genocide as accepted in the Convention on genocide. "Genocide means", according to the Convention, 'any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as :

- (a) killing members of the group ;
- (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group ;
- (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part ;

- (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group ;
 - (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”
- (Art. II Convention on Genocide)

The Pakistani army can be arraigned on charges of genocide on counts (a), (b) and (c) above, and, to some extent, probably on count (d). Thus, incidents of massacre of the members of a particular religious group, the Hindus, are too many to leave even an iota of doubt as to the intent of the army to destroy them wholly. The indiscriminate killing all over Bangladesh of men, women and children also proves the intent of the army to destroy the Bengalis, a distinct national and ethnical group. Both these will satisfy the requirements of the charge of genocide under section (a) above. To frame charges under (b), there will be no dearth of instances all over Bangladesh. Facts on the basis of which charges can be framed under section (c) are too obvious to be mentioned: 10 million refugees in India, 30 million fugitives in Bangladesh herself, millions of people without any shelter as a result of arson, etc., should be enough to prove the intention of the killers.

A pertinent question can be raised as to whether the genocide in Bangladesh consists in acts of individual aberration or an organized governmental policy. Anyone who has followed political events in Pakistan should not have any doubt that the genocide plan was pre-meditated and prepared at the highest governmental level. Looking back we find that, as early as 1966, after Sheikh Mujibur Rahman presented his Six-point formula, Ayub Khan declared that he would prefer going to a civil war rather than conceding to the demands of the Sheikh. Five years later, on March 6, 1971, his successor, Yahya Khan, repeated the same threat. A few days earlier he removed Admiral Ahsan from the Governorship of the then East Pakistan and Lt. General Shahibjada from the command of the Eastern Command. By nature humane, none of these two persons hail from West Pakistan. Tikka Khan who rose from the ranks replaced Admiral Ahsan. On March 15 Yahya Khan came to Dacca for talks with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Sheikh reported progress in their talks. But the talks were just to hoodwink the world and to gain some time. While the parleys were going on the army however cleared out areas around the Dacca Airport. They also controlled the administration of the airport where planeloads of arms and ammunition continued to come. One shipload of arms also came at Chittagong port. Meanwhile, they disarmed the EPR men throughout Bangladesh. When all preparations were complete, the army cracked down on the unarmed and innocent civilians of Bangladesh.

The tragedy of the freedom struggle however lies more in the fact that the United Nations failed to condemn the hideous action of the Pakistani army or to take any positive step to check it. The painful indifference of the U.N. once more brings into sharp relief the fact that



the world body is what the super powers like it to be. The savagery of the Pakistani army during the nine month period also raised a pertinent question : should a government have the unfettered right to do whatever it likes within its territory and get away with it without being censured by the world community ? A perusal of the U.N. Charter would convince any one that promotion of Human Rights is one of the cornerstones on which the world body is founded. In actual fact, it appears however, that there is an unbridgeable gap between the assertion of a principle and its execution.

The people of Bangladesh who went through untold misery and suffering and have at the end come out triumphantly have a special responsibility to fellow-sufferers all over the world. Already the people of India have remarkably shown their awareness of this responsibility. Let the two peoples therefore work together for building up a world where there will be no racial hatred, religious intolerance and cultural discrimination, a world where dignity of man will be upheld, human values will be respected, and rights of man will be zealously guarded, a world where there will be no exploitation of man by man, no tyranny, no oppression and a world where one man will love another and make it worth living.

EPR—Abbreviation for East Pakistan Rifles, a para-military force of which the Jawans were all Bengalis although the officers were drawn from the Pakistani army which is largely manned by the Punjabis.

MAZHARUL ISLAM

The Role of Intellectuals in Bangladesh

THE BENGALI Muslim intellectuals got involved in the movement for Pakistan not because they cared much for safeguarding Islam, the logic which was used to arouse popular sentiment, but because they cared more for the economic emancipation of the Muslims of British Bengal. It is not historically correct that the Muslims of Bengal played a prominent role in the whole of Indian subcontinent in the Pakistan movement only on the basis of religion—the economic and socio-cultural reasons were far more important. Since the bulk of the landlords and money-lenders were unfortunately Hindus, the movement was of course aimed against them. But twenty-four years after the same cause, the economic and cultural emancipation, again inspired the same people to rise against the class of exploiters—this time the exploiters were Muslim and the people of East Pakistan did not care at all what religion the exploiters professed. Thus, the bold, sincere and faithful participation of the Bengali Muslim intellectuals as well as the people of Bangladesh at large for Pakistan movement and later for the freedom of Bangladesh proved beyond any doubt that the exploiters have no religion.

Keeping this background in our mind, we may straightway enter the gateway of the history of the movement for Bengali nationalism which ultimately nourished the struggle for a free Bangladesh. Pakistan did not come up to our expectation even within one year after the achievement of this unnatural state having two wings separated by more than thousand miles and populated by people having completely different sets

of cultural heritage, uncommon way of life, alien geographical environment and different financial resources. This dissatisfaction was mounting day by day amongst the younger generation and the large number of intellectuals and it got its first explosion on February 21, 1952 when the blow from the ruling junta was so terrible that our young people had to shed blood on the street of Dacca and sacrifice their valuable lives. This day is marked as the Shaheed Day, the most sacred day in the national life of Bangladesh. This day is rightly regarded by the historians as the starting point of the movement for freedom of Bangladesh. Bengali nationalism in its present form in Bangladesh, of which we are so proud today, owes its origin from this day, the day of sacrifice and determination.

Thus, the ball was set on rolling and the whole process was on the gear. The younger generation, mostly guided by the intellectuals, came forward. The politicians as well as the intellectuals were completely dismayed and disappointed with the affairs of Pakistan. Democratic rights were denied, political leaders of East Pakistan were distrusted and many of them including Sher-e-Bangla Fazl-ul-Huq, the mover of Pakistan resolution, were branded as traitors. But what the politicians could not achieve through their platform and mass contact, the intellectuals could achieve through their planned, concerted and sincere efforts. From 1947 to 1954 there was no general election in the country. The intellectuals rose to the occasion and tried their utmost to fill up this political vacuum by arousing a cultural consciousness which ultimately provided a sort of cultural renaissance in society. And the net achievement was the banishment of communalism from the soil of Bangladesh and the beginning of a strong nationalistic movement based on Bengali culture. It became crystal clear to the intellectuals and the people at large of East Pakistan to realize that religion is only a part of a culture, it is not everything of a culture, as the ruling junta from West Pakistan and their handful of henchmen in East Pakistan have been so long shouting since the inception of Pakistan with an ulterior motive behind. The results of the general election held in 1954 provided a manifestation of this great achievement. All the parties fighting the election on the basis of religion were rooted out. This was again more vividly and gloriously repeated in the last general election held on the land that was Pakistan.

It will be a distortion of historical fact if we attribute to the role of intellectuals all the credit of this great achievement—the Bengali nationalistic movement. We must remember with respect the name of one man in this connexion whose contributions to the whole nationalistic movement since 1950 are so great and divergent in character that they cannot be measured in a paper like this. He is Bangbandhu Sheikh Mujib. We must remember that Mujib was one of the heroes in 1952 language movement, he was the main hero in 1954 general election and

then he was the only hero in the last general election. It is because of his dynamic leadership, it is through his sufferings and sacrifice, it is because of his unimaginable boldness that the whole nation stood like one man whenever the occasion demanded and came down to the street for struggle. All through his life, a lover of democracy, nationalism, secularism and socialism, Sheikh Mujib is really the father of Bengali nationalism. Being an ardent lover of democracy, it was possible for him, when he was not even a mature politician, to challenge the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali of Bogra, with the words "Well, Mr. Prime Minister, you may call me or many of us a traitor, but why don't you come to East Pakistan and contest an election with a traitor like me from your own constituency at Bogra and if I fail to forfeit your deposit, I will forego my political career for the rest of my life."

Sheikh Mujib was the symbol of nationalism to the masses, to the younger generation and to a large section of intellectuals. The intellectuals specially strengthened the hands of Sheikh Mujib in many ways and the whole movement was culturally oriented because of their constant participation, co-operation and brilliant contributions. The intellectuals resisted the conspiracy to write Bengali in Urdu or Arabic scripts and thwarted the conspiracy to modification of Bengali spelling and thoroughly foiled the evil designs to gradually eliminate Tagore from Bengali culture. They also condemned and discarded the planned injection of religious and the so-called Pakistani ideals in the body of education. Finally, the role of intellectuals and their sacrifice in the last phase of our freedom beginning from the non-co-operation movement to the direct fighting and struggle for Bangladesh freedom would certainly go down in the pages of history. There could be an elaborate discussion about the magnificent role of intellectuals on all these aspects.

Before I conclude, I must add that there is some dark side of the role of our intellectuals which cannot be altogether overlooked and it goes almost side by side along with the glorious one. When a large section of intellectuals were one with the language movement, a handful of them raised their voice that the Bengali language is the language of the Hindus. When a large section made a determined effort to foil the evil designs to ban Tagore, a group of them, numbering more than forty, came out with a statement in the paper that Tagore was not the integral part of our culture. Many other such examples could be cited. Even at the time, back in 1966, when Sheikh Mujib came forward with his Six-point programme, the programme which was a prelude to freedom and democracy, this fanatic group of intellectuals vehemently opposed him. Not to speak of the fanatic group and the reactionaries alone, I have even heard with pain many of my friends who profess so-called progressive ideals only in their drawing rooms to speak seriously against Awami

League and the Six-point formula. When we were busy in organizing resistance in different strategic points of Bangladesh in last April and May, many of these so-called drawing room progressive intellectuals got disappointed with Sheikh Mujib and his followers and professed with all the intellectual ability in their command that this movement was bound to be foiled. They cursed the leaders of Awami League and their intellectual followers that these were the people responsible for their sufferings and agony as they could no longer drive their cars and live within the state-provided high-rented luxurious buildings and were forced to take a safe shelter in the villages. And as soon as they found an opportunity to return to urban areas, they jumped from their shabbily arranged shelter and joined their profession without any care for humiliation and harassment. Many of them actively participated in the Radio and Television. Now they are again active for loaves and fishes. These are the intellectuals who would shed their tears for the suffering people when they are on the urban platform surrounded by their fellow admirers, but if they are asked to go to the villages and meet the people, or to forego some of their undeserved privileges for the sake of the people, they would react in a different manner.

In conclusion, I must say that I do not visualize any remarkable change in the attitude of these two groups of intellectuals—the fanatics and the so-called progressive elements—within a foreseeable future. While the former are silenced for the time being and are waiting to come up at the opportune moment, the latter are desperately hunting the privileges and opportunities. The bureaucracy, more or less, led by this latter group, is again getting an upper hand. I am afraid, they have already tightened their position around the new government. This being so, I deeply feel that there should be a cultural revolution—once we had our cultural renaissance, but what we want now is revolution. And only through that revolution it will be possible to make Bangladesh a seat of Bengali culture—a culture for which we would be proud to be introduced as Bengali both inside Bangladesh and abroad. Our education system must be reoriented—education must be people-oriented and secular in character and must accept the hard realities of life. Madrasa education must be completely wiped out. Bengali has to be introduced in all spheres of life, specially as the medium of instruction in all levels and of correspondence in the offices in a revolutionary measure. Since Bengali is the only language in Bangladesh, we have no problem. While Bengali is the only state language, English could be retained as the second language. Peasants and labourers must get their due share in our cultural regeneration. A close link on the basis of co-operation and understanding be built up between the rural and urban society. Whether we want it or not, cultural revolution is a must in the golden land of Bangladesh. *JAI BANGLA*

A. K. ROY

The Role of Intellectuals—Pakistan Period

INTRODUCTION

THE BIRTH of Bangladesh has proved, beyond doubt, the following concepts : (1) the myth that the Bengalis are traditionally a non-martial race is no longer tenable, (2) religion has a secondary role in shaping a nationhood, (3) mere political independence without economic emancipation does not mean much to the common people and finally Jinnah's two nation theory on the basis of which India was partitioned was basically a wrong approach.

One need not be a political pundit to understand that creation of Bangladesh was made possible because of the realization of some basic factors by the people of the then East Pakistan : (1) The majority of the inhabitants, who are ethnically, culturally and linguistically homogeneous, living within the geographical boundary of East Pakistan identified themselves as a separate nation ; (2) Economic exploitation of a colonial nature of Eastern zone by the then West Pakistan monopolists and businessmen ; (3) In order to continue the economic exploitation the West Pakistani colonialists and exploiters were determined to keep political power in the hands of their chosen *élite* group of people from West Pakistan.

THE BACKGROUND

The intellectuals of Bangladesh may be classified into two broad groups : (1) Pre-partition group and (2) Post-partition group. The intel-

lectuals belonging to the first group are, with few honourable exceptions, conservatives, firm believers of the Pakistani ideology ; many of them had significant contribution to Pakistani movement. Not necessarily, all of them were rightists in the popular sense of the term. This liberal group had their own justification of supporting the creation of Pakistan on communal basis. They thought that in 'would be' Pakistan the forces of capitalism would be much weaker, as such it will be an easier task to build a society free from economic and other forms of exploitation. Among the pre-partition group of intellectuals, however, there were some, although small in number, who opposed the idea of partitioning India on communal lines. They were secular in their attitude and firmly believed that India's communal problem could not be solved by dividing the country on the basis of Jinnah's theory. They were of firm opinion that communal problems of India were an outcome of the policy followed by the British Raj and India's economic structure built up by the foreign capitalists and Indian pseudo capitalists. According to them, the economic emancipation coupled with political independence was the real answer to communal question. However, the voice of this enlightened minority group never reached the common people.

Among the second group of intellectuals, who attained maturity in the post-partition era, a significant number is liberal, forward-looking and secularist. To them Pakistan is an accepted historical event. But they wished to build a socio-political system, free from economic or political exploitation, within the framework of one Pakistan ; to try to make Pakistan a theocratic state on the basis of the faith of a particular religious community is an attempt to reverse the flow of time. However, one should not generalize that all the intellectuals emerging in the post-partition period belong to the liberal group.

Most of the intellectuals of Bangladesh belong to the newly growing middle class. They are gradually becoming urbanized. But most of them still suffer from a cultural complexity arising out of the interaction between their newly discovered urban attitude and their traditional rural based ideas. This is being reflected in their works and social behaviour. As a result, majority of them seem to be self-centred and have a tendency to lead an isolated life in their own self-made world. As a consequence of this typical middle class attitude, a large section of the intellectuals always have been working for the betterment of their material life and to raise their social status. These have put a serious limitation on the activities of the intellectuals and they have failed to identify themselves as a community with the cause of popular democratic movement launched by the people. They have always kept themselves at a comfortable distance from the mass movement. Because of this opportunist and indifferent attitude the intellectuals have often allowed themselves to be used by

the Government in power and to dance with the tune of the pipe organ played by the Government; many of them have taken anti-people stand for their immediate personal benefit. What is more distressing is that many of our intellectuals sold their scholarship to serve the purpose of the totalitarian regime of Pakistan. It has been already pointed out that the middle class of our society is an emerging one. In a socio-economic structure of ours it is expected that the dynamism and leadership in progressive movement should come from the middle class, because this is the group which is educated and politically conscious. But unfortunately the middle class of Bangladesh, because of their newly found taste of urbanization, could not play their due role in democratic and popular movements, which their counterpart, placed in a similar situation, usually play in other countries.

Our intellectuals, specially the younger ones, suffer from a type of cultural conflict. On the one hand, they were taught and told that all the Muslims have inherited their culture from the so-called Islamic Culture nourished and developed in the holy lands of Islam—Arab, Iran, Turan. On the other hand, they were exposed to a highly developed local culture, culture of their own land in which they breathe. They were told that the local culture is alien to them. As a result of this inner contradiction, a large section of the intellectuals although they belong to Bangladesh geographically, yet remain foreigners in their own land culturally. Keeping this background in view, we have to understand the role of intellectuals of Bangladesh.

LANGUAGE MOVEMENT

The language movement which triggered off in the form of a strong verbal protest from a small but determined group of Dacca University students in 1948 when Jinnah proclaimed in Dacca that 'Urdu' should be the state language of Pakistan, gave the first expression of the fact that Bengali Muslims were making an attempt to identify themselves as a separate entity. Until 1952 the language movement was confined to students and a few intellectuals, mainly university and college teachers. Bulk of the people either remained indifferent or opposed to the movement because of the continuous governmental propaganda that the movement had been engineered by the anti-State elements like Communists, Hindus and Indian agents. But after the historic day of 21 February 1952, the character of the movement changed completely within a year or so. It became a spontaneous mass movement. The reason for transformation of language movement into a mass movement can be understood by studying the course of political development in East Pakistan. The Awami League, under the leadership of Moulana Bhasani, had already established itself as an organized party opposed to the Muslim League. A. K. Fazl-ul-Huq

rejoined politics and reorganized his old political party under the new name—The Krishak Sramik Party (KSP). Failure of the Muslim League Government in solving East Bengal's economic difficulties and Muslim League's coterie politics detached from the masses were thoroughly exploited by these two newly formed parties in their favour. People began to realize that the independence of 1947 had not improved their lot. The resentment of the people against the Muslim League and its Government found expression in the language movement. The defeat and complete annihilation of the Muslim League from the soil of East Bengal at the hand of the United front in 1954 election was not an accident.

It has already been pointed out that at the initial stage of the language movement the leadership and guidance came from a good number of intellectuals mainly from university teachers at the central level and from college and school teachers at local level. But as the language movement was gradually getting momentum and transforming itself into a mass movement, the intellectuals were withdrawing from the direct participation and in fact many became silent spectators in the latter part of the movement. Even then, in no other progressive movement the intellectuals, whatever their number may be, played such a significant role including physical participation for which they had to suffer at the hand of the Muslim League Government. Many university and college teachers including Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed Choudhury (then a teacher in Political Science, Dacca University), Prof. Munir Choudhury (then a teacher in Bengali, Dacca University), Prof. Sardar Fazlul Karim (then a teacher in Philosophy, Jagannath College, Dacca), Prof. Prithwish Chakraborty (then Provost, Jagannath Hall, Dacca University) and Prof. Ajit Guha (then a teacher in Bengali, Jagannath College, Dacca) had to undergo long terms of imprisonment. Among the intellectuals and teachers who also played effective role in the initial stage of the language movement are Prof. A. Kasem (then a teacher in Physics, Dacca University), Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah (then Head of the Department of Bengali and Sanskrit, Dacca University), Dr. Quazi Motahar Hussain (then a teacher in Statistics, Dacca University) and Mr. Ranesh Dasgupta, a famous journalist. In fact the convener of the first 'Rastrabhasa Sangram Parishad' was also a university teacher, Prof. Nurul Huq Bhuiya (then a teacher in Chemistry, Dacca University). Dr. Quazi Motahar Hussain wrote an article under the title 'State Language and Language Problem in East Pakistan' in Bengali wherein he had pointed out that Muslims of East Pakistan had no other alternative but to cultivate themselves through the Bengali language. He also urged the Government to accept the demand of the people, otherwise the relation between the two wings might come to an end. Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah wrote several articles dealing with language problem of Pakistan. He had a strong feeling against the acceptance of Urdu as the only state language of Pakistan. Ideally he

would prefer Arabic as the state language of Pakistan but considering the existing difficulties he advocated for Bengali and Urdu to become state languages of Pakistan. Whether his advocacy for Arabic was merely a pretext to counteract the claim of Urdu is not clearly understood.

Although a significant number of intellectuals, specially university and college teachers, have contributed to the language movement, the majority of them were silent spectators. The then famous journalists, poets, writers did not come out openly in an organized way to support or participate in the movement. People like Moulana Akram Khan, Mr. Abul Kalam Samsuddin, Golam Mostafa, Benjir Ahmed adopted the policy of 'go slow' or 'wait and see' policy. Some of them even opposed the language movement—a typical example is the memorandum in support of Urdu submitted to the then Chief Minister of East Pakistan by a group of intellectuals, namely, Mr. Abdul Hai (then a professor of Philosophy, Sylhet Govt. College), Mr. Shamsuzzaman Choudhury (then a lecturer in Philosophy, Sylhet Govt. College), Moulana Rezaur Rahman (then Editor of *Assam Herald* and *Yuga Veri*).

Though Bengali was finally adopted as one of the state languages of Pakistan in the 1956 Constitution, the attack on the Bengali language and culture continued in various forms. Since 1949 the attack on the language and culture was carried on simultaneously on two fronts : the Government forcibly tried to knock out the Bengali language from the soil of East Pakistan by replacing it by Urdu in the name of state language of Pakistan ; on the other side, a systematic hate campaign was launched by the Government in collaboration with the pro-Government elements of intellectuals in East Pakistan against the Bengali language and culture. It was openly preached by them that Bengali being a language of Bengali Hindus, a vehicle of idolatrous culture and ideas, it can not be fit to be a language of the people of an Islamic State like Pakistan. The Government also tried in various times to reform the language and its alphabets to put Islamic colour on the Bengali language in order to make it fit for expressing Islamic thought and ideas. The first attempt to Islamize the Bengali language came from Mr. Fazlur Rahman, the then Education Minister of Pakistan, in 1948 who suggested the adoption of Arabic scripts in the Bengali language. The Central Advisory Board for Education, constituted by the Government, made recommendation for adopting the Arabic scripts and spent lavishly for its implementation. Many educationists of East Pakistan including Mr. Osman Ghani of Teachers' Training College, Dacca worked for the Government. The Central Government wanted to exploit the religious sentiment of the people usually associated with the Arabic language. However, the Government met with a stiff opposition from the people and the student community. The liberal educationists, teachers and intellectuals including Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah openly

criticized the Government policy. As a result although the Government did not altogether give up the idea, it did not have the same zeal and courage to pursue the matter.

Another attack to jeopardize the language movement under the cover of reforming the Bengali language was made in 1949. This time, at the instance of the Provincial Government, a committee was constituted with a view to achieving the following objectives : (1) simplification of the language in respect of its grammar, vocabulary and spelling system ; (2) framing technical terms used in science and technology ; (3) making the language an effective vehicle of Islamic culture and thought. The inner motive behind this move was to change the accepted form of the Bengali language which took its present shape through evolution of not less than one thousand years. The Government's real intention was to deprive us from inheriting the rich treasure of Bengali literature to which the East Bengalis have equal share and to cut off our cultural life from the mainstream of Bengali culture and tradition. But the intellectuals, at least some of them, were trapped by the Government's apparently innocent good intention. Thus we see that in the Reform Committee people like Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, Dr. Enamul Huq and Professor Ajit Guha sat together with the conservatives like Moulana Akram Khan, Mouana Abdullah Al Baqi and Abdul Kalam Shamsuddin who were indifferent or even opposed to the language movement. Recommendations of the Language Committee, which were never published before Ayub Khan came to power, were most reactionary and imposed artificial barrier against the natural and free development of the language. Use of some popular idioms was proscribed on the plea that those idioms and proverbs convey un-Islamic thought and ideas. The only positive side of the recommendation was that the Committee rejected the idea of adopting Arabic or Urdu script in place of conventional Bengali script. It is a matter of disgrace that some of our learned people allowed themselves to be used by the Government. While the role of the conservatives and pro-Government elements like Moulana Akram Khan, Abdullah Al Baqui, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, Sheikh Sohrabuddin could be understood, the association of people like Dr. Shahidullah and Professor Ajit Guha with the committee's recommendations created confusion in public mind. The role of Dr. Shahidullah, all through the language movement, was confusing and sometimes self-contradictory. On the one hand, his genuine love for the Bengali language and culture made him a natural supporter of the language movement but, on the other hand, because of his deep religious attachment he had developed some weakness for the Arabic language.

However, the Government at that time did not dare publish the recommendations because of fear of strong public reaction. But Ayub Khan after assuming power in 1958 published the recommendations with

the sole intention of striking at the root of the Bengali language and culture from behind. Getting encouragement from the Ayub Government the Bangla Academy, again with a view to reforming Bengali alphabet, formed a committee which recommended for some changes in Bengali script. This time also the move was foiled because of strong reaction from the students, teachers, litterateurs and philologists.

Inspired by the dictatorial Ayub regime some individuals who have no reputation either as litterateurs or philologists began to put forward their novel ideas of reforming the Bengali language. A typical example may be cited here. Mr. Abul Kasem, who once played a praiseworthy role in the language movement, established a Bangla College with the idea of imparting education through Bengali medium. The college received appreciation and generous help from the people. But very soon Mr. Kasem was found to use the institution as a base for propagating and experimenting his ideas of Islamizing the language and corrupting the established form and spelling system of the language. He was so much successful in his attempt that people could hardly follow his newly invented language.

Lastly, at the instance of the Ayub Government, the University of Dacca also constituted a committee for looking into the problems of Bengali script and spelling system with the following prominent members—Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, Dr. Enamul Huq, Professor Munir Choudhury, Prof. Abdul Hai, Dr. Quazi Din Mohammad, the then Director of Bengali Academy, Mr. Ibrahim Khan, an ex-principal of a college, Dr. S. Sazzad Hussain, Mr. Abul Kasem, Principal, Bangla College. The Committee suggested some reforms although experts like Dr. Enamul Huq, Prof. Abdul Hai and Prof. Munir Choudhury strongly opposed the reforms. The Dacca University Academic Council adopted the recommendations with a majority of votes in 1968. As soon as the suggestions were made public the students, teachers and other intellectuals openly protested against the reforms and declared that they would strongly resist any attempt for implementing these recommendations. Noted writers, poets and people of learning wrote critical articles pointing out the unscientific and motivated approach of the reforms.

Ayub Khan wanted to strike the Bengali language and culture from the back and for this purpose he wanted to use the people of East Bengal itself. He had no love for the people of Bangladesh. He was very clear about his objectives—(1) to destroy Bengali culture and this would kill the growing national feeling of the East Bengalis; (2) to evolve a political system in which the enlightened politically conscious middle class would have no effective role to play. By achieving these objectives Ayub Khan's Government which enjoyed the confidence of the West Pakistani monopolists and Punjabi military *élite* group wanted to continue the political and economic dominance of Punjab over entire Pakistan including its Eastern

zone. The institution of the so-called Basic Democracy was the product of the thought outlined in (2). Ayub Khan knew that achieving the objective mentioned in (1) would not be an easy task. He was conscious of the East Bengalis' proud feeling of their culture, language, tradition and history on which their national identity exists. So taking the lesson from the language movement he preferred to strike the East Bengalis' cultural heritage from within. To achieve his objective Ayub worked on many fronts: (1) propagation of communalism and fanaticism; (2) injection and popularization of ideas that the language and culture of Bengali Muslims are different from those of Bengali Hindus; (3) Islamization of the Bengali language and culture; (4) buying up of Bengali intellectuals to use them in his favour.

Ayub Khan knew if he could utilize the services of Bengali intellectuals in his favour his mission would be successful. Exploiting the weakness of the intellectuals and their typical middle-class opportunism he was able to get their services in lieu of which they were amply rewarded. Such was the extent of these benefits that a section of intellectuals were able to raise their standard of living to an enviable level within a very short time.

The Government-sponsored institutions like Pakistan Council, Bureau of National Reconstruction (BNR), Writers' Guild, Bengali Development Board, Nazrul Academy, etc., came into being. Through these institutions motivated and regimented ideas were propagated continuously against traditional Bengali culture. The main purpose of these institutions was to invent a new culture for Bengali Muslims and to cut them off from the mainstream of our cultural heritage. These bodies also acted as screening bodies to pass judgement on some sections of our literary works as un-Islamic. As a result, all literary works of Hindus including those of Rabindranath were coloured as un-Islamic. Even Nazrul Islam was not spared by them. A deliberate attempt was made by the BNR and Nazrul Academy to project Nazrul's image as a communal poet—in their language, an Islamic poet.

Many of our established writers, poets and other litterateurs were bought by these institutions through handsome bribes. Even worst type of manuscripts were bought at handsome prices. In the name of encouraging research activities many research projects were undertaken and money was sanctioned lavishly without taking into consideration whether such research projects should have any bearing on the country's needs. The result was articles after articles came out with full praise for the Government policy. Ayub Khan was successful in corrupting our intellectuals, young and old, to a great extent. The role of intellectuals, with a few honourable exceptions, during the Ayub regime, was most inglorious.

When the Ayub-sponsored Education Commission's report was made public in 1962, whose main object was to keep education restricted to

a privileged class, the student community reacted violently. A large-scale movement was launched demanding the withdrawal of the report. But our intellectuals preferred to keep mum. Even for academic interest the Commission's report was not seriously and critically examined by our academic community.

During the 1965 war between India and Pakistan, the behaviour of our intellectual community was most saddening and disgraceful. Instead of decrying the warmongers and hawks of Pakistan and India and instead of propagating the ideas that this type of war could not solve people's problem the intellectuals chose to echo the Government propaganda and to resonate the tune set by the autocratic regime. Our poets composed poems and songs, our essayists wrote articles and our academics issued statements in support of the war; these only encouraged the hawks on both sides. Even some of them joined the Government propaganda machinery of 'Hate India' campaign which soon turned into anti-Hindu propaganda conveniently forgetting the existence of not less than ten million Hindu population in Pakistan.

When the Ayub Government was making an onslaught on our culture, language and history by corrupting our language in the name of reform and Islamization by propagating the concept that East Bengali Muslims have a cultural and linguistic entity different from their Hindu neighbours, etc., a large section of our intellectuals co-operated with the Government. When Rabindra Sangeet was banned on the plea that Tagore's works were not in conformity with the Pakistani ideology, many of our learned professors, Radio and T.V. artistes, musical personalities hailed the decision. However, strong protest came from the students and progressive section of our intellectuals.

Worse still, when Ayub Khan's so-called political autobiography—*Friends Not Masters*—was published, our intellectuals joined the chorus of appreciation. Some of them even went to the extent of suggesting that the book be included in our curricula of education from school to university level.

The situation during the Ayub regime and the degeneracy of our intellectual community can be summed up from the observation of a learned professor of Dacca University. The professor very correctly observed: "Government set up institutions, organized seminars and conferences and financed publications with the sole object of communalizing our history, and suppressing our cultural tradition in order to buttress its totalitarian regime in the name of Islam. And what was more distressing is that some of our own members whose intellectual integrity must be of a very low order, readily allowed themselves to be used for this purpose."

SECULARISM AND THE INTELLECTUALS

The word 'secularism' was a taboo in the political and cultural life of Pakistan. In the name of serving the cause of Islam and Pakistan, Ayub's propaganda machinery continuously fanned communalism. In this effort Ayub got staunchest support from a significant number of our intellectuals. Through writings and Radio-T.V. talks, holding seminars and discussions, this group of intellectuals played the governmental tune very effectively with zeal and enthusiasm. The progressive group failed to make any concerted effort to counteract the Ayubi propaganda; nor did they launch any programme of action for driving out communalism from the soil of East Pakistan. When from time to time communal riots broke out in Pakistan, this liberal group of intellectuals, of course, very courageously organized 'peace councils' and anti-riot demonstrations. But these types of sporadic efforts usually did not make any long-time impact on society.

However, this must be admitted that although the Ayubi propaganda of communalism continued vigorously, a movement for creating secular atmosphere in the country, though weak and sporadic, was launched by a few intellectuals mostly on individual basis. The 'Lekhak Sibir', an organization of young intellectuals, made a determined effort to popularize the idea of secularism. Centring *Samakal*, a literary magazine, a group of writers and poets, namely, Sikandar Abu Zafar, Sowkat Osman, Hasan Hafizur Rahman, Shamsur Rahman did try to create secular culture in East Bengal through their forceful writings. Dr. Ahmed Shariff, a teacher in Bengali, Dacca University and primarily an essayist, took up his pen to fight against religious narrowness and fanaticism almost singlehanded. Through his books, namely *Bichitra Chinta and Swadesh O Anvesha*, Dr. Shariff did try to strike at the root of religious fanaticism, propagated the secular ideas and championed the cause of liberal thinking. One is also reminded of the writings of Badrud-din Umar in this context. Umar took up his pen to attack communalism. With his sound Marxian analytical vision he correctly identified the root cause of communalism in our society. In his two books *Sampradayikata* and *Sanskritik Sampradayikata* he clearly exposed the narrow thinking of our intellectual luminaries.

THE MASS MOVEMENT OF 1968—69

The movement launched by the students for the realization of 11-point demands and the withdrawal of the Agartala Conspiracy Case against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and others soon turned into a militant mass movement directed against the autocratic regime of Ayub Khan. The magnitude

and extent of the movement were unprecedented in the political history of Pakistan. The law-enforcing agencies crumbled and total chaos and confusion prevailed in the province. The 'leds' were much ahead of their leaders. The leftists of all shades again showed their unpreparedness to capitalize the situation—their theoreticians once again exposed their weak analytical power of judging political temperature of the country.

The Government in power tried to suppress the movement with force of a rare brutality. The army was called in to meet the situation. Hundreds of unarmed people including students became army victims. Dr. Shamsuzzoha, Professor of Chemistry of Rajshahi University, was brutally killed by them. This type of atrocities only outraged the people and the movement gathered momentum. This was the first time that university teachers openly participated in a mass movement. They organized demonstrations, public meetings and processions. The teachers went on continuous strike demanding to bring the army culprits to justice. The Ayub Government had to bow down to public demand by withdrawing the Agartala Case and releasing Sheikh Mujibur Rahman unconditionally. Ayub Khan stepped down in favour of Yahya Khan, the then C-in-C of the Pakistan army, who imposed martial law a second time in Pakistan with a solemn pledge to the nation that he would transfer power to democratically elected representatives at the earliest opportunity. The movement subsided temporarily.

NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

On March 1, 1971 when Yahya Khan arbitrarily postponed the meeting of the newly elected National Assembly which was scheduled to meet on March 3, 1971, East Pakistan turned into Bangladesh. The people of all sections, from students to man on the street, university teachers to primary school teachers, highest paid government officials to lowest paid chaprasis, High Court judges to Munsifs, joined the non-co-operation movement launched by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The so-called legal Government simply vanished—the Sheikh and his Awami League became the *de facto* ruler of Bangladesh. Teachers, students, writers, poets, journalists and even film artistes came down to the streets with the common people. The demand was only one—Independent Bangladesh. Yahya gave a reply to this demand, a very hard reply, by unleashing his brutal army to commit genocide on Bangladesh. The date chosen was March 25, 1971, the blackest day in the history of civilization. The process of Yahya's 'final solution' of Bangladesh problems began. Bangalis accepted the challenge. And at the end we came out victorious but not before millions of the sons of Sonar Bangladesh were sacrificed.

ALI ANWAR

Intellectuals and the Bangladesh Movement

THIS is an exploration into the sociology of class involvement in a revolution. The class consciousness and cohesion amongst intellectuals *qua* intellectuals is minimal and hence to speak of their collective role is always open to objections and discussion of necessity becomes hedged round with qualifications. The following comments are offered by way of preparing a working paper for discussion by people more competent than I am to speak on these things.

A proper understanding of the role of the intellectuals as a class in the Bangladesh movement necessitates some understanding of their peculiar position in a developing society like Pakistan.

Renan once said that the position of the intellectuals in British society was peripheral while in France it was not. By the same token one could describe the position and status of the intellectual in Pakistani society as ambiguous at best. It was more than peripheral but not central enough. The ambiguity of its position followed from various factors.

From the very start the various classes in Pakistani society remained rather unstable and the distance between them and their relative proximity to the source of power always remained a variable quantity. The political and social fabric paid the price for it in terms of prevailing tension, anomie and Machiavellianism. The Muslim League leadership which brought about the birth of Pakistan mostly came from the landed aristocracy. If the political leadership was quickly appropriated by the landed aristocracy, the army and the bureaucracy also did not lag

far behind and made their presence felt pretty soon through the murder of Jinnah (!) and Liaquat Ali Khan and the Pindi Conspiracy Case. Bureaucrats like Gulam Mohammad, Choudhury Mohammad Ali and Mohammad Ali of Bogra captured the seat of power in succession to be ousted in their turn by the erstwhile nominees of the army like Iskander Mirza, Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan. The role of the emerging capitalist class began to be increasingly recorded behind the policy making of various governments which followed one another in succession. The quadrangle of power existed by way of mutual tension and came to a working arrangement amongst themselves. On the social plane, however, this combination of four classes was not always one of tension since members of one could always come from the other group and most often it was the feudal group which had one of its members in the role of entrepreneur and another in the army and a third in the bureaucracy. Intellectuals were no part of the scheme. By definition they were too amorphous a group to exert their influence as a class to compel the other groups to reckon, or share power, with them. The aristocracy had a congenital distaste for the intellectuals. It was the traditional contempt of the landed aristocracy towards members of classes other than itself; particularly since the members of this intellectual class often accommodated the socially nondescript, the lowly and the poor as well. The antipathy of the army towards the intellectuals stemmed from ignorance and from their contempt for the man of contemplation. The bureaucrats—the ICSs of the British raj—being vain about their intellectual accomplishment and administrative expertise felt and expressed a certain amount of distrust towards the intellectuals.

However, the working arrangement which these four groups arrived at regarding the wielding of power and distribution of offices could not be a stable arrangement and the neurotic fear to lose power resulted in a propensity at monopolization and oligarchy at the top and thereby a denial of democracy at the political plane. The resultant tension kept all the parties concerned on their toes and kept the power composition fluid all the time. Power flowed from the feudal or capitalist classes to the military-bureaucratic oligarchy and vice versa. Of course, economic inequities and political hectoring endemic in such a situation could only result in great suffering for the people and spread dissatisfaction to the remotest part of the country. Intellectuals played, according to their individual abilities and each in his own style, the role of Cassandra in forecasting the impending disaster. Not all of it was dispassionate search for truth or commitment to radical change and not a few had preferred friendly advice to the government with an eye on the lucrative offices at the top for themselves. University professors like M. N. Huda or newspaper editors like Syed Altaf Hussain became ministers by nomination, Professor G. W. Choudhury became Chief of the Foreign Affairs Division.

Whether these recruits from among the intelligentsia were there on sufferance or whether they were looked upon with admiration and expectation is not important for us at the moment. But appointments and promotions like these showed amongst other things the assailability of the power hierarchy and social mobility of the intellectuals. Intellectuals became all the more aware of the heights they could attain and the possibilities which were denied to them. In some it resulted in cynical careerism and fawning obsequiousness. In others privation brought resentment and hardened their attitude. The bureaucrats in power had never relinquished their claims to the dubious honour of being intellectuals and a civil servant like Mr. Quadratullah Shehab had been foisted on the Pakistan Writers' Guild or Altaf Gauhar on Pakistan Council or an ex-Policeman like Mr. Anwar Ali or Quazi Anwar-ul Huq had been made chiefs of supposedly cultural organizations like the Bureau of National Reconstruction. This interchangeability of roles had profoundly affected the mind of the intellectuals and more often for the worse. The encroachment of the intellectual sphere by the bureaucrats contributed much to the feeling and atmosphere of political surveillance from the top and the resultant inhibition all around.

The dubious status of the intellectual was all the more highlighted during the Avub regime. The ambivalent attitude of this government was reflected in its alternation of attraction and repulsion in its dealings with intellectuals. The regime apparently valued the role of the intellectuals as survivors of ideology. But its cynicism is betrayed in the crude manner in which it meant to bribe the intellectuals to ensure its allegiance and the threats and intimidations it held out to those who did not conform. The regime, however, never felt quite safe with the intellectuals in spite of everything they for a decade did to keep it in good humour. The degree of the army's exasperation with this unpredictable class was most dramatically thrown into relief in the army's intention at total elimination of the Bengali intelligentsia since 25 March 1971. This was also an admission on their part of the emergence of the intellectuals as a potential threat to their arrangement of power and an ironic tribute to their capacity to disturb the pattern of things, or in other words, spearhead a revolution. Thus even at the risk of oversimplification and exaggeration one is tempted to trace the Bangladesh movement to the tussle between the establishment and the intellectuals—a variation on the Bloomfieldian archetype.

A closer look at the situation in East Pakistan would further clarify the points made above. The middle-class intellectuals were almost non-existent at the time of the partition. It was a heyday for the feudal land-owning class which had captured the positions of power. This landed aristocracy had never quite recovered from the traumatic shocks of the Permanent Settlement and the sundown law which caused the fall of many a formi-

dable house in Bengal. Repressive measures which came in the wake of the Sepoy Mutiny and popular uprisings like the Faraizi movement and the Wahabi movement put it all the more on the defensive. For the next century this class reacted to whatever changes took place in society by a peevish atavism in its social and cultural outlook—an unmistakable sign of decadence. One of the reasons why this class got organized into the Muslim League in the late thirties and posthaste showed enthusiasm for Pakistan was because of the dream of recovering its position in Muslim Bengal with a low literacy level and an almost non-existent Muslim middle class. This dream was realized in no time. The Nawab and the zamindars of Dacca, Mymensingh, Bogra, Murshidabad and the like fairly distributed amongst themselves the lucrative offices of influence and power and thus got a new lease of life.

Members of this class for reasons of class identity and ethos continued to cultivate the Urdu language and culture. This was partly to show the continuing line of pedigree with the aristocratic families outside Bengal and partly to show their distinctness from the plebian natives who were their tenants. What was once a fact of social existence had now become a form bereft of content—a symbol of status. The members of the emerging Muslim middle class were often absorbed and swallowed by this so-called aristocracy through marital arrangements and the newcomer in the fold diffidently acquiesced in the culture and language of the host class out of weakness for the aura of aristocracy. Nawab Abdul Latif's plan for expansion of education amongst the Muslims put the situation with a candour and naïveté scarcely found elsewhere. His recommendation to the Hunter Commission reads: "Briefly summarized my opinion as regards Bengal is that primary instruction for the lower classes of people who for the most part are ethnically allied to the Hindus should be in the Bengali language. For the middle and upper classes of Mohammedans Urdu should be recognized as the vernacular. That is the language which they use in their own society in the town and country alike and no Mohammedan would be received in respectable society among his own co-religionists if he were not acquainted with Urdu."

With the expansion of education and with independence the Bengali Muslim middle class proliferated and it is no mere accident that the demands for a rightful place for the Bengali language in Pakistan and the vociferous identification of Bengali Muslims with Bengali culture is synchronized with the rise of the Bengali Muslim middle class. This class was everyday growing in power and influence. The demands of an expanding economy in Pakistan necessitated the diversification of administration through such bodies and institutions as the Industrial Development Corporation, Water and Power Development Authority, the Agricultural Development Bank, the Trade Promotion Centre, the Institute of Public Administration, etc., in all of which the emergent Bengali middle class had

to be grudgingly accommodated. The new intelligentsia were naturally eager to extend their jurisdiction of power and laid claims to the very topmost positions. Conflicts with the power clique which was managing things at the centre was inevitable. This clique camouflaged under the banner of Islam. The Bengali intelligentsia dodged and parried but laid bare at the same time the pretensions and practices of the West Pakistani vested interests and their motive in raising religious slogans.

But this was not easy. Democracy had been subverted a long while ago. Ayub's Parliament which was but a surrogate for democracy was designed to suit the interest of the few who had monopolized all power and wealth in the country. It made a mockery of the principle of representation. The intelligentsia were debarred from engaging in politics at a stroke of the pen. University teachers could not become members of political parties, could not organize political meetings or rallies or propagate political views and could not contest elections. Personal freedom of the teachers of the university had been extremely curtailed through the modifications of the University Ordinances. The Press also became a casualty at the hands of this regime, through the surveillance of the Press Trust—a body which was instituted to keep an eye on the political role of the Press. Considerable control was exercised on the Press. Papers which toed the line with the Government were rewarded with generous release of revenue-earning (Government and semi-Government) advertisements. The dissenter and the deviant were, on the contrary, punished through various harassments. Like the Press Trust, cultural monitoring was attempted through the Writers' Guild and the Bureau of National Reconstruction and the Radio. The Bureau of National Reconstruction which purported to promote intellectual activities ironically maintained a secret liaison with the Ministry of Home and the Intelligence Department in its initial stage and earned a well-deserved opprobrium for that. There was still a third agency to keep watch on the intellectuals. It was the Pakistan Council. It had its branches in the provincial towns as well. And then there was of course the Intelligence Department whose main business became to keep watch over the political activities of the people. The activities of the opposition political parties became extremely restricted and much of the debate by the opposition on the floors of the Parliament became, for all practical purposes, futile academic exercise.

There could be three modes of response for a conscientious intellectual in the prevailing state of affairs. One could risk his neck and court martyrdom by open dissent. One could leave the country and go elsewhere. Or one could wage a war of protest by indirection. Few chose martyrdom and avoided it as long as possible till the last and the final phase when the movement engulfed everybody and hundreds of intellectuals shared martyrdom with the people. Scores of people, however, lost teaching jobs in the universities and colleges for being politically suspect. Professors

and journalists were put in jail as security prisoners for years on end without trial. This was also a kind of martyrdom. Scores of others left the country and organized political action abroad for the restoration of democracy in the country. A large number of intellectuals who were involved in the Bangladesh movement had got opportunity to clarify their ideas about democracy, secularism and cultural identity through the deliberations of such action committees and political rallies while studying abroad.

Protest by indirection, however, proved to be the most viable form of warfare. Prevarication and innuendos in a dialectic were given the honour and sanctity of political weapons. The object presumably was to checkmate the Government through diversionary moves. It was a sort of intellectual guerrilla action. Repeated insistence on Jinnah's speech at the inaugural session of the Constituent Assembly in 1947 on the secular basis of Pakistani nationhood is a case in point. A similar example would be found in the resuscitation of the Lahore resolution of the All-India Muslim League Conference in 1940. Instead of spelling out the demand for an independent Bangladesh the intellectuals and politicians harped on the theme of autonomous 'States' within a loose confederation of Pakistan as envisaged in the Lahore resolution. An academic seminar on national economy under the aegis of the Bureau of National Reconstruction participated by innocuous academicians could thus become a politically loaded dialectic on 'two economies' for two wings of the country. Not always was the political lesson made obvious. The writer of an article on culture or a speaker on a similar theme dropped broad hints but carefully avoided the reduction of his pronouncements into political terms. The emphasis on separate cultural identity and demand for cultural autonomy really masked the question of material inequalities and the longing for economic freedom. At times an essay on the Kashmir problem by Prof. Habibullah or a review of the functioning of the Basic Democracies by Prof. Rehman Sobhan or a mere letter to the Editor for publication in the columns of *The Pakistan Observer* by Prof. Siddiqui on the Sharif Commission Report on Education assumed significance and created impact which went much beyond the intentions of the authors and became classic examples of fighting by indirection. Or, take the parable of the slave who had forgotten to laugh, written by Shaukat Osman, which on the face of it would remind one of the political literary *tour de force* of Elroy Flecker; *Hassan* really attains significance because of the political context in which it was written. None of these pieces were overtly anti-Pakistani but all of them contributed to the clarification of the ideology of the Bangladesh movement.

But protest, however indirect, devious and masked, could hardly escape the gloomy prospect of the ultimate confrontation. The extent to which the intellectuals accepted the responsibility was a measure of their

response to their sacred calling. The theme of dissent was a continuous strain in the literature of Bangladesh of the two decades. Thus strain which started as a feeble note and was often drowned in the strident aggressive voice of conformist pastiche and propaganda noise was, however, never lost on the people. At rarer moments the dissenting voice had the effect of an explosion owing to the courage of conviction, clarity of meaning and unambiguity of purpose of the speaker. Much of Badruddin Umar's writings which started in the style of academic hair-splitting over definitions had a similar effect. One is also reminded of the writings of Abul Fazal, Ahmed Sharif, Abdul Huq and Hazari in this context.

The intellectuals addressed the students mainly, and through the students the people. There were other and more direct channels of communication as well. Most of the intellectuals who belonged to the semi-urban forward-looking middle class had roots and tentacles in the villages. Through these contacts the intelligentsia were transmitting their own hopes and aspirations, fears and frustrations to the people just as much as the economic exploitation and suffering of the people was hurting the middle class and keeping the intelligentsia under pressure to urge for a political solution of the problem. The new middle class thereby consolidated its leadership over the people in a sense in which the old aristocracy had never done. Thus in spite of the absence of properly organized political parties it was possible to give the dissatisfaction of the people a political direction, and the people gratefully responded to every call of the intelligentsia. Mass participation in the language movement, or in the movements for the withdrawal of the Sharif Education Commission Report or against the script reform cannot be explained otherwise. Intellectual issues, however dimly understood by less educated villagers, had been converted for them into symbolic counters which somehow or other got identified with their material problems that they understood and fought for.

If the role of the intellectuals was often rather negative the justification has to be sought in the absence of democratic institutions and traditions which alone possibly could have provided the necessary protection for the dissenting individual. The healthy tradition of critical liberalism amongst the Bengali Muslim intellectuals of the twenties and thirties apparently got lost in the post-partition political wilderness and army dictatorship. But the tradition had not been lost altogether. It had merely gone underground to reappear in the writings of the intellectuals every now and then. The spirit of scepticism and religious reevaluation evoked by Quazi Abdul Wadud, Abul Hossain and their associates in the twenties was ultimately vindicated in the triumph of secular nationalism in Bangladesh. The leadership of the intellectuals lay not so much in the actual manipulation of a movement which was done by the students mainly, but rather in inspiring it and in creating the ideological foundation for it.

In no other society was the integrity of the intellectual more under stress and strain and more exposed to temptation from above than in East Pakistan. Material success had become so easy for the docile and the compliant and the path of dissent so immediately hazardous and the outcome so uncertain that not everybody radically oriented was willing to throw in his lot with the desperate millions who were poised to take to violence. If the intellectuals had shown any class characteristic in their collective behaviour it was in their ambiguous stance of moderation and their cry of legitimacy and constitutionalism in a climate charged with violence. But that was to be taken care of by the political parties.

A *rapprochement* between the intellectual and the political parties, particularly the Awami League, was not a long way off and as the movement gained momentum the intellectuals came out on the streets. On the 21st of February last year Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave a call from the restrum of the Bengali Academy to the intellectuals to prepare themselves for the ultimate sacrifice. The memory of the death of Dr. Samsuzzoha, Proctor of Rajshahi University, at the hands of the Pakistani army the year before must have been on his mind. Dr. Zoha's death on the 18th of February had actually touched off the final explosion that secured the release of Mujibur Rahman from the Agartala Conspiracy Case. The noble sacrifice of Dr. Zoha was reciprocated by hundreds of professors and school teachers who took up arms in the liberation movement after 25 March. The catastrophe pulled down the class barriers and the exposure to brutal violence shattered the mental habits, values and fixation of the intelligentsia. The *rapprochement* between the people and the intellectuals was complete. As a consequence the resistance was total.

QUAMRUZZAMAN

The Role of Liberation Forces and Youth

IT WAS during the early days of the intrusion of the Pakistani army into the rural areas of occupied Bangladesh that invaders used to ask, 'Mukti Fauj Keya Chiz Hai?' Little did they imagine at the time that they would have to pay so heavily to gain a knowledge of the Mukti Fauj—later on known as the Mukti Bahini—meaning the young Bengali guerrillas.

MUKTI BAHINI IN EMBRYO

Since the days of February 1952 little boys and girls were grouped into Sabuj Sena, Khelaghar, Mukul Fauj, Mukul Mela, Boy Scouts, Mani Melas, Kachi Kanchar Ashar, and such other sports and cultural institutions. They used to have their training from a political victim of 1952, or from a retired army captain, or from a young journalist. These institutions had their head offices in the principal cities of Bangladesh. They met every afternoon ostensibly for games and sports. They marched the streets on ceremonial occasions. They joined official parades and gave guards of honour. They took part in strikes and protests singing patriotic songs and shouting slogans. On the 21st of February every year, these little children walked barefooted in the streets during the early hours of the morning and went to the Sahid Minar of their respective localities and presented floral wreaths and sang

*Amar Bhaier Rakte Ranganô Ekuse February
Ami Ki Bhulite Pari.*

By the year 1971, they became sufficiently strong and disciplined and conscious of their power to lead the nation to fight and gain victory.

THEIR NOBLE HERITAGE

It may be quite appropriate to mention here that the liberation movement of the youths of the Indo-Bangladesh subcontinent started long before 21 February 1952. Revolutionaries like Hardayal, Taraknath, Barquatullah, Ramkanai and Rasbihari Bose planned to overthrow the Government of India at the weakest moment of the Britishers during the World War I. They formed the Ghadar Party in America, Canada, Asia and Africa. They spread the fire of revolution in the army barracks. Just when the situation had ripened for an attack—and the 21st of February was fixed for the final assault—one Kripal Singh divulged the secret. Heavy British repression came down upon the young revolutionaries and swept them away. The plan failed, but the tireless efforts and indomitable courage of the patriots did not go in vain. Can anybody deny that they made the land fertile for the growth of the seed? This is our heritage. The succeeding generations of youth drew their inspiration from this devotion and sacrifice. Little known as this chapter of the battle for independence was, it nevertheless left an indelible impression on the heart of the fiery young people of the land.

THE BIRTH OF BENGALI NATIONALISM

When freedom came to Indo-Bangladesh subcontinent in 1947, it came in the shape of Pakistan and India. For the people of Bangladesh, it was a mere change of masters. This so-called independence was nothing but a camouflage for exploitation. The youths of Bangladesh were groaning with discontent. 21 February 1952 is the day on which nationalism was born in Bangladesh. Jinnah declared, "Urdu shall be the state language of Pakistan." The students sharply replied, "No." They resisted this heinous attempt to deprive them of the use of their mother tongue. On 30 January 1952 the boys and girls of the University of Dacca started meetings, processions and strikes to oppose Jinnah's machination. The flame spread throughout the length and breadth of Bangladesh. 21 February 1952 saw the streets of Dacca littered with the dead bodies of Salam, Barkat, Raffique and many other unknown martyrs. *Rastra Bhasa Bangla Chai*. This thunderous voice brought home to the Pakistani ruling class that the Bengalis were not dead. Their voice could not be stifled. They would stake everything to protect their mother tongue and their culture. They demanded that regional languages of Pakistan should be made state languages. They shouted, *Urdu Bangla Bhai Bhai, Rastra Bhasa Bangla Chai*. This is a slogan of unity between man and man, between nation and nation. Disunity is the weapon of the ruling class and reactionaries of all ages. The Bengalis lost no time in realizing that Urdu, Bengali, Pustu, Baluch, Sindhi and Punjabi all had

equal rights. On the issue of language and on it all people of Pakistan may unite. A new Pakistani society would emerge, in which a peasant of Bangladesh would unite with his fellow brother in Baluchistan so that their regional languages received equal status and recognition. From this recognition of the right of the people to use their own languages an indomitable unity of labouring class would follow. This was more than what the exploiting ruling class could stand. They did away with whatever semblance of democracy there was in Pakistan. They came down with martial law. They fought the movements of the Bengali youth on several fronts.

THE ERA OF REPRESSION

The ruling class patronized a perverted group of students called the National Students' Federation. Their activities rose to a climax during the administration of Abdul Momen Khan, the Governor (since killed by Mukti Bahini guerrillas). They carried on anti-social activities with impunity throughout the country. They assaulted the members of other organizations. They created havoc in peaceful meetings and processions. They were often helped by the 'guardian angels'. In the sphere of religion, the government agents distributed favours to the self-seeking moulanas, pirs and so-called Islamic scholars. These venerable (!) gentlemen were there to divert the minds of the young generation and preach communalism. Many pirs and sardars enjoyed direct favours of Ayub Khan and had since been thrown into prison for collaboration, murder, loot and arson. In the field of literature Bengali scripts were being replaced by the Arabic ones. Tagore's songs were banned. Arabic words were recklessly incorporated into the Bengali language. To crown all, the Public Safety Ordinance was ruthlessly put into operation.

HOW THE YOUNG REVOLUTIONARIES REACTED

Despite the reactionary measures and oppressions, the student community held firm to their own. At the outset they fought their battle not with swords but with pens. Boys and girls set their minds to creative endeavours. They produced books and magazines, works of arts and crafts, attended musical performances and social dramas. They took keen interest in progressive discussions. As a result, a diabolical struggle appeared in the families between the reactionary father and his progressive sons and daughters. An autocratic guardian, however, showed more respect to his rebellious offspring than to a submissive one.

THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DACCA

Student movements and the University of Dacca are two memorable

terms. From the year 1952 till the War of Liberation, the University was the citadel of all political warfare. Indeed, the War of Liberation itself centred round the University. The leadership in every movement was given by the students of this sacred institution. Two students' unions, *Chhatra League* and *Chhatra Union* worked hand in hand. The people of Bangladesh had boundless confidence in them. They joined the processions of students, teachers, poets, litterateurs, artistes and peasants. They brought about the downfall of Ayub Khan. They were instrumental in releasing their Mujib Bhai from jail. They rallied round the mature leadership of Mujib and addressed him as Bangabandhu. As soon as they heard from the dictator Yahya that the National Assembly would not meet, they left their classes. Boys and girls raised the slogan "Down with Yahya and his announcement". The voice resounded from all halls. The Sgt. Zahrul Haque Hall (previously called Iqbal Hall) was the source of student-leadership. The first procession came out from this hall. Students from other halls also came out in torrents. The whole university campus turned out to be an arsenal of high explosives. At Nilkhet university campus the only slogan was "Bangladesh has become independent". In the huge gathering at Paltan Maidan the Central Sangram Parishad of Students officially launched the non-co-operation movement. On March 2 the largest gathering in living memory was held at Bat Tala university campus. In this meeting the flag of Bangladesh was first hoisted. All present saluted this flag. The portrait of Jinnah was burnt down. Every one present took the sacred vow to free the country—the vow of Independence, the vow to pay the debt of the martyrs. They realized that when all other avenues were closed before them the best way was to take up arms. Boys and girls took training in arms. They paraded down the streets carrying rifles and bamboo canes. They put up barricades on the streets. On 25 March 1971 the University halls turned into forts of the liberation army. From this very day the Pakistani army started their genocide in Bangladesh. The resistance by the students tumbled before the sophisticated arms of the Pakistanis. Many of the students and teachers were killed. The survivors crossed over to India. They took training in Indian villages. People of all ranks—workers, peasants, and teachers of schools, colleges and universities—spontaneously joined them. The students of the University of Dacca pledged to proceed towards the goal they dreamt of—the building up of a new nation free from exploitation.

THE LIFE AND DEATH STRUGGLE

If the unprecedented genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani Genghis Khans did not shake the conscience of the world, the heroic fight put up by the liberation forces astonished it. Ill-fed, ill-clad, with small arms



our boys of the age varying from 10 to 20 moved in hills and jungles. They faced the fury of the Meghna and the Padma with canoes made of banana plants. In torrential rains they attacked the enemy stronghold. They fought the Razakars. Their only asset was the support of rural population. They broke the morale of the Pakistani army and when the Indians took the field, they broke up the Pakistani forts like a house of cards. Our young boys enlisted support for liberation army and collected funds by holding meetings in foreign countries. Our girls took musical squads in the operation zones to encourage the patriots. They nursed the wounded. Sometimes they joined the guerrillas in the fight.

THE ROLE OF LIBERATION FIGHTERS AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Our young people became jubilant that they had won the first round of the battle for independence, but they must remember that the next battle is still to be fought. They have driven away the foreign enemies no doubt. There are enemies inside in the shape of the rising capitalists, the feudal landowners, the industrial exploiters, blackmarketeers and bureaucrats. They are the cancers within the body politic of Bangladesh. A social revolution is necessary to eradicate them. With that end in view the youth are rallying the people round them. They advise all sections of people to introduce Bengali as the medium of instruction. Holding high the banner of secularism, nationalism, democracy and socialism, they go on preaching the doctrine of social revolution.

Hardly in the history of man has the student community been found to exercise so much influence on the course of events and thereby guide the destiny of a nation as in Bangladesh.

KABIR CHOUDHURY

Secularism and Bangladesh

SECULARISM is an essentially modern concept. The word secular may have more than one dimension, but the meaning of secularism in the context of a State's policy is quite unambiguous. In Bangladesh the Government has declared secularism as one of its four basic policies, the other three being nationalism, democracy and socialism. There are many other things which are necessary and desirable to have and promote in a modern state, but one cannot express them all in a policy declaration. Of necessity one has to choose and select on the basis of importance and priority. Obviously secularism fulfilled the required criteria and hence its inclusion in our formally articulated policy pronouncements.

In the past many bloody battles had been fought in this world over religion, especially in the Middle Ages. Unspeakable cruelties and tortures were inflicted in those days in the name of religion. The horrors of the Spanish Inquisition are only a part of the story. In modern times too, apart from senseless killings and other barbarous deeds religion has been used in many places as a comprehensive tool of exploitation of the poor by the rich and the ruling junta. Should we then consider religion itself as something unholy and undesirable, something to be scrupulously eschewed and ruthlessly banished from the lives of the people? To answer this question adequately one has to embark on a philosophical discussion of what religion really is, but I do not think it is called for in this brief paper of ours. One could mention here only this: Religion and religious practices—its rites, rituals and ceremonies—are not one and the same. You could religiously follow all the outward and external

rites and practices prescribed by a particular religion and yet continue to be thoroughly irreligious and a villain like the smiling Iago—irreligious in the broader sense, where you most unfeelingly ignored the basic human aspirations and demands. Whenever there has been any oppression and torture in the name of religion, the power-hungry oppressors and the ruling clique had extravagantly emphasized the importance of the observance of religious rites and practices. They have misled the simple people by motivated interpretations of the dictates of religion. They have blurred their innate good sense and piety and raised in their hearts the monster of religious fanaticism. In fact, once in the grip of religious fanaticism, men can easily degenerate into beasts. They can then commit the most heinous crimes with impunity and still feel that such deeds were only opening up the gates of Heaven for them. The feudal conservative, backward-looking, colonial rulers could play this game effectively in the medieval age when distinction between Religion (Church) and the State was bleary and undemarcated. When men stepped into the modern age a significant change took place in the philosophy of statecraft. Religion and State were no longer considered as one and indivisible, and the former became only an element of a citizen's personal and private life. At least, theoretically and as a matter of principle. This, however, did not mean that the rulers and persons at the helm of a state's affairs gave up using religion as a weapon for realizing their own selfish ends, but now they could do so only indirectly, with cleverness and hypocrisy, from behind a mask as it were.

But the rulers of Pakistan hit upon a new device for using religion as a tool of exploitation even in this modern age. In the middle of the twentieth century, they were so brazen-faced as to associate religion with the philosophy of the State, but in their efforts to mislead the people of the whole world as well as of their own country, they said that when they spoke of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan they meant a republic where equality, fraternity and justice for all would prevail. In other words, Islam meant a progressive, liberal, humanitarian welfare-oriented philosophy of life, and no narrow dogmatic or conventional religion. This was what they said and preached. We all know what they actually practised. The history of the last twenty-four years is replete with innumerable examples of how the reactionary West Pakistani ruling junta used religion (Islam) as a handy tool for exploiting the poor toiling simple folk of East Bengal (and also the poor toiling masses of West Pakistan). Mousing big words about fairness, justice and liberality of Islam they often inflamed the hearts of common men with religious fanaticism, blurred their common sense view of religion by obscurantism and threw them headlong into internecine fratricidal quarrels. The colonial rulers of Pakistan wrecked many a popular mass movement by injecting this virus of religious fanaticism in the hearts of her people.

They tried this trick during the recent liberation war of Bangladesh too, but their efforts met in partial success only. Of course, during all the twenty-four inglorious years of Pakistan's misrule its corrupt dictators raised the bogey of 'Islam in danger' whenever they faced any problem of law and order on any major scale and blamed 'Hindu India' for all her ills. Before the Pakistani army's barbarous crackdown on Bangladesh in March 1971, the military junta had systematically brainwashed the members of the armed forces of West Pakistan and created in their hearts an unparalleled feeling of anger, hatred and resentment against the people of Bangladesh whom they painted as enemies of Islam and as degenerate Hindus who deserved to be mercilessly wiped out if only to save Pakistan, the citadel of the whole Islamic world today. The atrocities committed by the Pak army on both Muslims and non-Muslims, on men, women and children alike, on helpless infants and the old make the blackest deeds of Hitler's Nazi hordes look small and insignificant in comparison. This, however, is not the whole story. On the one side, we saw this frenzy worked up mainly through religious fanaticism; on the other side, we see the heart-warming spectacle of Hindu and Muslim freedom fighters fighting shoulder to shoulder as one man, their unity forged by the devotion to an ideal higher than that of the conventional religion. I think, this triumph in Bangladesh of an 'idea' based on truth, patriotism and nationalism over the demands of traditional religion is bound to lead the whole of Asia, nay, the world to far-reaching consequences.

Today we have declared firmly that secularism is one of our State policies. We have done so because we have seen the horrible outcomes of religious fanaticism. At the cost of untold miseries and after wading through the streams of blood, tears and sweats, we have reached at last this golden gate of secularism. We shall have to put it down as an articulated faith in our State policy till it takes deep root in the hearts of all our people and becomes an axiomatic and natural law, a matter of spontaneous reaction in our behavioural pattern and an innate philosophy of our life. And I am sure that in Bangladesh it will not take long for secularism to take deep roots, firstly because in our villages we do have an age-old tradition of religious catholicism and of communal peace and harmony; our folk-songs, folk-tales and many of our folk-rites and practices show a harmonious mingling based not on narrow religious dogmas but on broad humanistic urges and aspirations. Secondly, we have just emerged through the crucible of fire and seen for ourselves what are the results of the cruel ravages of religious fanaticism. During the British colonial regime our foreign rulers fanned religious (communal) feelings to further their own policy of 'divide and rule'. Later, during the Pakistani regime the rulers of West Pakistan used religion to exploit Bangladesh, not only politically and economi-

cally but organized campaigns to reform Bengali script. They tried to Islamize the literature of East Bengal. In all these efforts of theirs they behaved like true and unabashed colonial masters. And all this was in the name of religion. They used threats and coercion. They promulgated orders and ordinances and handed down autocratic decisions. They offered bribes and rewards. They tried their best to destroy the broad, liberal and humanistic tradition of the literature of Bangladesh, but failed because of the glorious stand that was taken by our wide-awake and emancipated youth, students and writers. The seed of secularism is inherent in the soil of Bangladesh. For now and then in the past, at moments of great stress, some of us might have slipped and erred, duped by mischievous propaganda and egged by false machinations. But in our heart of hearts we are irrevocably committed to secularism.

This is not to say that we do not have to take any positive and well-planned steps to make secularism a healthy and ennobling way of life leading to the happiness and prosperity of all our people, irrespective of class and creed. We must clearly define the meaning and scope of secularism. It is to be made clear that secularism does not mean the absence or lack of religion. It does not even suggest an attitude of neglect or indifference to religion. It simply means that no individual or institution or community will receive any special privilege from the State because of the simple fact of its belonging to a particular religion. Of course, the citizen will be completely free to follow his own religion in his own way without any interference from the State. But no particular religion would receive any special treatment or preference or protection from the State. In other words religion would simply be a purely personal and private matter of the citizen, a matter of his personal conscience and of his equation between himself and his God.

As soon as secularism is accepted as a way of life, a number of other truths stand revealed before us. We realize then that every man can discover for himself the ultimate moral and spiritual truth in his own way by following the dictates of his religion, and that it is not imperative for a person to follow a particular religion in order to find spiritual salvation. We further realize that the heart of religion is not in the religious practices, in the mechanical observance of its external rites and rituals, but in its underlying ideas and thoughts and in its noble ideals of human welfare and happiness. In other words, in the final analysis, there is only one religion, the Religion of Man, the religion of love, of charity, and of compassion.

And yet we have seen this true religion trampled under feet time and again in the name of conventional religion which emphasized only its lifeless and dull routine and rituals. Today we have accepted secularism as one of our State policies not as an empty slogan, but as a neces-

sary pre-condition for the establishment of an exploitation-free, socialist economic order. In this task of turning Bangladesh into a truly socialist state secularism will play a dynamic role. Among other spheres, it will make its impact best felt in the country's educational and administrative fields. It has been already doing so. I am sure we shall soon feel its impact in a much more effective and positive manner in the social, cultural, economic and political spheres of Bangladesh.

I am reluctant to end this paper without a reference to the glorious role played by India in our freedom struggle. During the entire period of our liberation war secular India acted as our true friend, philosopher and guide. I take my hat off especially to the people of the States bordering Bangladesh for their exemplary patience, courage and generosity, for the way they maintained communal harmony and peace in their States in the face of tremendous odds particularly during those difficult months of the influx of an incredibly large number of refugees from Bangladesh into their areas, bearing the scalding marks of brutal torture by the near-insane religious fanatics of the Pak army. However, those dark days are now over. Bangladesh is now a free, sovereign and independent state. We have tasted undying glory and priceless freedom. Secular India and secular Bangladesh are now set to march together on the road of democracy and socialism, determined to ensure in the near future prosperity, if you will, for all rather than abject poverty for many and affluence for a few.

SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY

Nationalism, Secularism and Democracy in Bangladesh

NATIONALISM thrives on feelings of national insecurity. Before partition, the Muslim masses of Bengal were made to see two enemies : alien rulers, who were British, and the local zamindars, most of whom were Hindus. The effective leaders of the Bengali Muslims were non-Bengalis who, whipping up a feeling of insecurity among their followers, made them feel that they were a separate nation. An artificially contrived Pakistani nationalism came into existence even before the creation of Pakistan. It flourished because of the imaginary dangers the Muslims of Bengal were confronted with. The Muslim masses had hoped that the establishment of Pakistan would mean for them an end of exploitation, and the beginning of a life without misery. For such was the promise made to them. So they participated in the movement for Pakistan and voted for it without hesitation. But once Pakistan was achieved, the myth of Pakistani nationalism turned completely against them. What had promised to be a weapon for the common man against the exploiters became a weapon in the hands of the bureaucrats, the industrialists and the army against the masses. The wielders of this weapon of nationalism belonged to what was West Pakistan, particularly the Punjab. They had their masters abroad and servants in East Pakistan. The self-deluded Bengali believers in, and propagandists of, Pakistani nationalism did not try to know whose interest they were serving. Having been granted comforts and privileges denied to their fellow countrymen they thought they belonged to an *élite*. Money was spent on them ; opportunities were opened for them. These stooges of the West Pakistani imperialists lived in a kind of euphoria, and felt they had never had it so good.

The Pakistani nationalists were anti-people. Intense feelings of

nationalism were generated, and people were incited to develop the worst forms of chauvinism and jingoism with two purposes in view. First, to make people forget their basic needs for food and shelter. Those who shouted that they were prepared to carry on a thousand-year war with India, if necessary living on grass alone, wanted, in reality, to reduce the hungry masses to grass-eaters. Secondly, the bogey of 'nation in danger' helped the rulers to stifle all movements for democratic rights. Anyone who spoke in favour of the common man could be, and was, dubbed as anti-Pakistani.

So far as the Muslims of Bengal were concerned, the initial act of unmasking the face of the creators of Pakistani nationalism was done, albeit unwittingly, by the so-called father of the nation himself. His declaration that Urdu, and Urdu alone, shall be the state language of Pakistan confirmed the worst suspicions of the Bengalis. The declaration did not go unchallenged. Not unexpectedly, the protest came not from the established politicians, the hopeful government servants, and the prospective businessmen of East Bengal, but from the students who were freer than any other section of the community. This found expression first in their movement for the recognition of Bengali as one of the state languages in 1948, only a year after the inception of Pakistan. It started as a town-based student movement, but in 1952 it was transformed into an unprecedented and uncontrollable mass movement. The transformation was natural because the masses in East Bengal had by then become even more disillusioned than the students. The public that had created Pakistan sought to take their revenge by joining the movement against Pakistan. A measure of the discontent among the masses was provided by the complete routing of the Muslim League in the provincial elections of 1954. This was the party that had claimed public support on the strength of its having created Pakistan. The Bengalis in Pakistan had come to know that their first enemy were the rulers in West Pakistan.

In resisting this new enemy, the Bengali masses took up, once again, the weapon of nationalism. A conflict between the nationalisms of the Pakistanis and the Bengalis was inevitable. It continued to grow both in volume and depth. In reality, the conflict was a clash between the vested interests and the deprived masses, between the forces of autocracy and those of democracy. The emergence of Bangladesh as a new nation is the outcome of this conflict.

Why did Pakistan fall? It fell because the common man who had brought it into existence went against it. The masses were denied participation in the running of the country. They were subjected to the most intensive form of exploitation imaginable. Democracy was never given a chance in Pakistan. Martial Law was imposed before the proposed first general election could be held, and the results obtained

in East Bengal from the first-ever election which was held under a second Martial Law brightened the power-addicted rulers into committing such crimes of genocide as are unknown in human history. They were frightened because they saw that the common man in Bangladesh had found them out and that he was not prepared to put up with any further exploitation. In Pakistan, democratic decentralization was never practised, and social changes necessary for the establishment of democracy were never brought about. Wealth and power were concentrated in the hands of the West Pakistani wielders of Pakistani nationalism. Apparently, Pakistan had quite a few strong points. It boasted of a fine military machine, an efficient bureaucracy, and even a rapid economic growth. But the public, especially of Bengal, were alienated, and it was public disaffection that brought down Pakistan to its doom.

The total failure of Pakistan is, therefore, attributable more to the failure of democracy than to anything else in Pakistan. Extreme nationalism tends to lend itself, as in Hitler's Germany, to do things in the fascist way. The rulers in Pakistan were downright fascists; they were totally uninterested in the welfare of the public. The dangers of nationalism without democracy were amply illustrated by the ruthless oppression and exploitation the Pakistani fascist rulers had perpetrated. The conclusion to be drawn is obvious. Nationalism without democracy is dangerous: it strengthens the hands of the rulers and brings suffering to the people. The question that we in Bangladesh must never fail to ask is: who wields the weapon of nationalism in Bangladesh? For what purpose? We must learn from the history of Pakistan, and see to it that the common man is able to repose confidence in the State and that his lot is continually improved.

An improvement in the economic condition of the masses is a prerequisite of the working of democracy. For democracy will never work in a society where human misery crosses the border of human endurance, where the separation between the rich and the poor is more complete than the separation between the white and the coloured in the system of apartheid. The right to vote does not mean anything to a starving man if he is convinced that whoever comes to power hunger will continue to stalk him as before. We must remember that without socialism democracy has no future in Bangladesh. Socialism need not wear any particular garb as it used to do during the days of Pakistan when a fictitious brand, called Islamic Socialism, was invented with a view to making people forget the socialist goals and concentrate their attention on the Islamic cover. It is a common knowledge that National Socialism has never been a welcome phenomenon. Nationalism and socialism must not, therefore, be allowed to forge an alliance without the safeguard of democracy, lest the union should produce a national disaster in the shape of fascism.

Nationalism is a potent force. It can, as it did during the liberation movement, unite the people in Bangladesh in fighting the imperialists and their agents, and in their endeavour at eliminating the vestiges of Pakistani imperialism and nationalism from the consciousness of those who formed the *élite* of the country. Secondly, it can be a very powerful factor in accelerating the economic growth in Bangladesh. What with hurt feelings and chronic poverty, the Muslims of Bengal had perhaps withdrawn themselves from the struggle for existence and looked back nostalgically to the imaginary glories of a past civilization that was supposed to have flourished in the Middle East. Bengali nationalism signifies a return to realism, to adulthood, to a discovery of its real identity. Nationalism begets patriotism which, in its turn, can make people devote themselves to the task of fighting hunger and disease. But patriotism should mean love for human beings rather than love for the land. For even the Yahya Khans were lovers of Bangladesh which they wanted to keep even for generations to come. It is, again, made worthy of the love, and for that they must at least be provided with the basic necessities of life.

Democracy in Bangladesh has its enemies. Vested interests grow easily, and once grown they go beyond control. True, the Punjabi rulers are gone, but their imperialist bosses remain as do the *élite* that had, till recently, been working for Pakistani nationalism and against the movement for the liberation movement of Bengalis. The conspiracy to foil the prospects of democracy will certainly be continued. Poverty itself is a sworn enemy of democracy; for it generates helplessness and hero-worship. Moreover, democracy has been absent in this land for many centuries. Temperamentally and traditionally, we are undemocratic. Our training and education have been designed to produce deracinated and anti-people aliens. Freedom of expression has not existed here within living memory. Tolerance is something we hope to develop in the future and can ill afford to lose it at the moment.

While nationalism and democracy are old slogans, secularism is a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. It is new because communalism has been an old disease with us. The Muslim middle class was afraid of its Hindu counterpart. The well-to-do Hindus had lost meaningful contact with their Muslim neighbours. That Bengali literature during the late 19th and early 20th centuries should fail to reflect the life of the Muslims, who formed the majority of the population, is no accident. Partition of Bengal was an inevitability. The Muslims had favoured it in 1905, so had the Hindus in 1947. In Bengal it is hard to deny that communalism was a fact of life.

Apart from creating a cleavage among the people which went to the benefit of the fascist rulers, communalism produced several other evils. For it made people fatalists; it prompted them to ignore the material

world and live in a world of wish-fulfilling after-life. It taught people how to place paradise behind them and not in front of them. The imperialists and their local lackeys took particular interest in seeing to it that communalism flourished in Bengal. Secularism is important not only because it can assist us in forging a unity against the common enemies of hunger and disease, the imperialists and their agents, vested interests and anti-democratic forces, but also because it is likely to contribute greatly towards the achievement of the much-needed destruction of the very breeding-ground of communalism itself. Communalism is bred in ignorance, superstition and bigotry. The members of the Al-badar gang of the Jamaat-i-Islami, who, under the aegis of the Pakistani army, organized during the period of occupation a systematic killing of the secular and progressive intellectuals of Bangladesh, were drawn, let us remember, not from the unlettered masses, but from students of universities and colleges and even from university teachers. The education system in the country worked for fostering rather than eliminating fanaticism and narrow-mindedness. Moreover, communalism was deliberately fanned by the rulers. It is in this context that the potential role of secularism ought to be viewed. But chronic diseases are not easily cured and old habits die hard. Frustration leads to reliance on the supernatural; poverty and ignorance act and react upon each other. Consequently, like democracy, secularism in Bangladesh will be required to fight a very grim battle indeed.

The teeming millions of Bangladesh will be an economic liability unless they are transformed into a united, active and determined people. The only way to bring about this transformation is through a combined, harmonious and simultaneous working of nationalism, secularism, democracy and socialism. We need them together and not one after another. The people were united during the war of liberation, because they had a common cause and a common enemy. Now that the war has ended, a clash of interests seems inevitable. It is here that the greatest danger for Bangladesh lies. For it is through this cleavage that the imperialists and their lackeys will try to enter Bangladesh and work, once again, on their evil designs. Where does the hope lie? It lies with the people of Bangladesh who had once brought Pakistan into being in the great expectation of creating a better future for themselves, and finding Pakistan working against their interests had pulled it down. Faced with violence, they snatched away arms from the killers and fought against them in a manner which has no parallel in the history of Bengal. They know their enemy and are conscious of their rights. Their strength constitutes the real strength of Bangladesh. The future is for them. It should be the duty of the intellectuals in Bangladesh to help the people in their struggle.

A. F. SALAHUDDIN AHMED

The Emergence of Bangladesh : The Historical Background

THE EMERGENCE of Bangladesh as a sovereign state is a landmark in contemporary history. The struggle of Bangladesh was not only a struggle for the emancipation of a people ; it was a struggle for the preservation of democratic and human values which were trampled underfoot by a ruthless military dictatorship.

Bangladesh is a secular and democratic state. Secularism and democracy are closely-linked concepts and interconnected ideals. In Bangladesh, as in other parts of the world, they have developed through a historical process.

The Muslims who form the bulk of the population of Bangladesh have long been faced with a dilemma regarding their cultural identity. On the one hand, they have been for centuries drawn by religious bond with the Islamic world ; on the other, they have retained their indigenous cultural background which tied them closely to the non-Muslim local population. In fact, the characteristic feature of the Bengali Muslims has been their isolation. The tendency to regard the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent as one single community with a distinct social outlook and culture has proved misleading. Thus, soon after the creation of Pakistan, Jinnah and the Muslim League Government tried to make Urdu the state language of Pakistan on the plea that since Urdu was the 'national' language of the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent it only had the claim to be regarded as the state language of Pakistan. But this attempt met with bitter resistance in East Pakistan. Even the Quaid-i-Azam's arguments put forward with great vehemence at public meetings held in Dacca in March 1948 emphasizing the fact that since Pakistan was one state and the Pakistanis constituted one nation, there could only be one state language and it should be Urdu, were bitterly opposed by the Bengali Muslims, parti-

cularly the student community. They demanded that both Bengali and Urdu should be made the state languages of Pakistan on the ground that majority of the people of Pakistan lived in East Bengal and spoke Bengali. Attempts made by the Muslim League Government to depict the student agitation as Hindu or Communist-inspired did not succeed. Eventually, the Government was forced to accede to the demand and declare both Urdu and Bengali as the two state languages of Pakistan.¹ But the student agitation gave birth to a strong regional movement for greater autonomy and economic freedom. It swept away the Muslim League from power in the general election in East Pakistan held in 1954. The imposition of Martial Law twice between 1958 and 1969 failed to curb the movement. The colonial attitude of the West Pakistani politicians, bureaucrats, capitalists and military leaders, greatly strengthened regionalist feeling in East Pakistan.² It was out of this feeling that Bangladesh nationalism was born.

Nationalism in Bangladesh has assumed a secular character. During the last twenty-five years there has been a radical change in the political and social outlook of the Bengali Muslims. During British rule Hindu-Muslim communal antagonism had become the dominant feature of the political life of the Indian subcontinent. Communal separatism which began to manifest itself in Muslim political behaviour in the nineteenth century was the product of the peculiar historical, economic and social conditions prevailing in an age of transition. While the exclusive nature of Islam was partly responsible for it, Hindu exclusiveness and conservatism which generated a feeling of indifference, if not hostility, towards the Muslim community greatly contributed to the growth of separatism.

Till 1885, when the Indian National Congress was founded, a number of public organizations had been established by Hindu leaders such as the Bengal Landholders' Association (1837), the British Indian Association (1851), the Patriotic Association (1865), *Jatiyya Gaurab Sampadani Sabha* (1866), the *Hindu Mela* (1867) and the *Jatiya Sabha* or the National Society (1870). The Muslims had little to do with those organizations. The Hindu leaders did not make any serious attempt to draw the support or win the sympathy of the Muslims. To the Hindu leaders of the age "nationalism meant unity and the basis of national unity in India, they believed, had been Hindu religion."³ As the great Bengali nationalist leader Bepin Chandra Pal (1858-1932) noted that in those days the Hindus regarded the Muslims and Christians "as foreigners".⁴ Similar was the attitude of Muslim leaders towards the Hindus. In 1876 Surendranath Banerjee (1848-1925) had established the first broad-based political organization in India called the Indian Association. It represented the views and aspirations of the educated Bengali Hindu middle class. It began to demand large share in the country's administration. The newly emerging Muslim middle class of Bengal, however,

was in no mood to collaborate with the Hindus in any political venture.² It was anxious to carve out a separate political career for the Muslims. Thus at the initiative of Syed Ameer Ali (1849-1928), the first Muslim Barrister of Bengal, and Nawab Ameer Ali (1810-79), an influential Muslim zamindar belonging to "the old school", the first political organization of the Muslims, namely, the National Muhammadan Association of Calcutta was established in 1877.³ Although the Indian National Congress had always some Muslims in its fold and it stood for secular nationalism and demanded the introduction of democratic institutions, the bulk of the Muslim community kept away from it. Muslim leaders like Nawab Abdul Latif (1828-1895) and Syed Ameer Ali opposed the Congress because they believed that Muslim interests would not be served by it. Nawab Abdul Latif kept away from the Congress because he did not believe that the time was "opportune for forcing the hand of Government."⁴ Ameer Ali was "firmly convinced that unqualified adoption of the programme of the Congress will lead to the political extinction of the Muhammadans."⁵

In fact, such views only emphasized the growth of a separate Muslim nationality with its own separate interests and aspirations. The concept of nationality was, however, still confined within the narrow limits of the English-educated Bengali Muslim middle class of the urban areas which had begun to speak for the entire Muslim community. The English weekly newspaper, *The Moslem Chronicle*, edited by Abdul Hamid and published from Calcutta (1895-1906), reflected the most vocal section of Bengali Muslim opinion.⁶

The later nineteenth century renascent Hinduism and renascent Islam suffered from inner contradictions. Thus, on the one hand, as a result of the Western impact they manifested growing interest in European liberal and rationalist thought of the age; on the other hand, they showed increasing attachment to traditional religious ideas and values. In fact, neo-Hinduism and neo-Islam were sought to be rationalized by their Western educated exponents like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894) and Syed Ameer Ali in the face of contemporary knowledge and contemporary criticism. This dichotomy in the social outlook of the Hindu and Muslim middle classes of Bengal prevented the growth of a composite Indian nationalism.

Hindu-Muslim difference also served British imperial interests. Thus a British official, Sir John Strachey, writing in 1888, observed:

"The truth plainly is that the existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India. The better classes of Mohammedans are already a source to us of strength and not of weakness, and a continuously wise policy might, I believe, make them strong and important supporters of our power. They constitute a small but energetic minority of

the population, whose political interests are identical with ours, and who, under no conceivable circumstances, would prefer Hindu dominion to our own."¹⁰

In 1905 Bengal was partitioned by Lord Curzon ostensibly on grounds of administrative consideration but many Bengalis particularly Hindus felt that it was a move to split the politically articulate Bengali-speaking people. The partition greatly intensified nationalist feeling in Bengal and gave rise to Swadeshi and terrorist movements. Very few Muslims were involved in these movements.¹¹ Bengali Muslim opinion, at first critical of the partition,¹² was later reconciled to it. The creation of the new Muslim majority province of Eastern Bengal and Assam seemed to open up new opportunities for the growing Muslim middle class. In fact, the Government tried to "counteract the anti-partition movement with the help of Muslim opinion."¹³

The failure of the Muslims to support the anti-partition movement seemed to hurt Hindu feelings and sharpened communal antagonism. But the great poet, Rabindranath Tagore, a liberal humanist, who was free from narrow communal prejudice and had himself taken an active part in the anti-partition movement, correctly analysed the Hindu-Muslim problem. In a somewhat introspective mood he wrote :

বঙ্গ বিচ্ছেদের ব্যাপারটা আমাদের অন্নবস্ত্রে হাত দেয় নাই, আমাদের হৃদয়ে আঘাত করিয়াছিল। সেই হৃদয়টা যতদূর পর্বন্ত অথবা ততদূর পর্বন্ত তাহার বেদনা অপরিচ্ছিন্ন ছিল। বাংলার মুসলমান যে এই বেদনার আমাদের সঙ্গে এক হয় নাই তাহার কারণ, তাহাদের সঙ্গে আমরা কোনদিন হৃদয়কে এক হইতে দিই নাই।

সংস্কৃত ভাষায় একটা কথা আছে, ঘরে যখন আগুন লাগিয়াছে তখন কূপ খঁড়িতে যাওয়ার আয়োজন বুঝা। বঙ্গ বিচ্ছেদের দিনে হঠাৎ যখন মুসলমানকে আমাদের দলে টানিবার প্রয়োজন হইল তখন আমরা সেই কূপ খননেরও চেষ্টা করি নাই—আমরা মনে করিয়াছিলাম, মাটির উপরে ঘটি ঠুকিলেই জল আপনি উঠবে। জল যখন উঠিল না, কেবল ধুলাই উড়িল, তখন আমাদের বিস্ময়ের সীমা পরিসীমা রহিল না।

("The partition of Bengal did not take away our bread, it struck at our heart. The pain was all over the extent of which was indivisible. The reason why the Muslims of Bengal were not with us in this agonizing experience was that we never tried to unite our hearts with theirs.

"There is a saying in Sanskrit : It is futile trying to dig a well when the house is on fire. During the days of the partition of Bengal, when suddenly it became necessary for us to have the

Muslims on our side, even then we did not try to dig a well. We thought that the water would gush out if we merely struck the ground with a pot. When instead of gushing water there arose a cloud of dust there was no limit to our surprise."¹⁴)

In face of the Congress movement for annulment of partition conservative Muslim leaders began to formulate their own political demands. In October 1906 a deputation of Muslim leaders headed by the Aga Khan waited upon the Viceroy, Lord Minto, and presented a memorial in which they demanded separate Muslim representation in the elective bodies.¹⁵ The Viceroy expressed his sympathy with the Muslim demand which in fact was conceded in the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909. Meanwhile in December 1906 the All-India Muslim League had been established chiefly at the initiative of Nawab Salimullah of Dacca.

An analysis of the social composition of Muslim leadership in Bengal at the beginning of the present century would reveal certain interesting features. It comprised persons like Syed Ameer Ali, Nawab Salimullah and Nawab Ali Chowdhury who were Urdu-speaking and who held the Bengali language and culture with contempt. They were loyal supporters of the British raj and represented conservative political and economic interests. The Muslim League came to represent these interests and it developed as a party of zamindars and English-educated Muslim middle class. At no stage was the Muslim League dominated by Muslim religious leaders. It was during the time of the Khilafat movement the Muslim religious leaders were drawn into political activity. But they worked in close alliance with the Congress rather than with the Muslim League. The Khilafat movement was more inspired by Pan-Islamism than Indian nationalism. But the importance of the Khilafat movement lies in the fact that it brought the Muslim masses into politics. After the abolition of the Turkish Caliphate by Mustafa Kamal in 1924 the Khilafat movement began to lose its strength and eventually died down. The Muslim League which had suffered an eclipse during this period began to increase its political activity and influence. In 1937 Fazl-ul-Huq's Krishak Praja Party having failed to enter into an agreement with the Congress joined hands with the Muslim League to form a coalition ministry in Bengal. In 1940 the All-India Muslim League at its annual session held in Lahore demanded the partition of Indian subcontinent and the creation of Muslim majority state in North-West and North-East zones of India. This was the beginning of the movement which led to the birth of Pakistan in 1947.

The movement which led to the creation of Pakistan was not a religious movement. It was a political movement of the Muslim community of India for the establishment of a separate homeland. Fear of Hindu political domination which would adversely affect the community's political, economic and cultural interests seemed to have been an

important factor which influenced the movement. Although in traditional Islam politics and religion are inseparable, this is no longer true of contemporary Muslim society. That the movement for Pakistan was political and not religious (although religion was utilized for political purpose) and that it did not seek to establish an Islamic religious state or a theocracy, is evident from the very character of its leadership. Few of the leaders of the movement had any deep personal attachment to traditional Islam. It was precisely for this reason that orthodox Muslims represented by such organizations as the *Majlis-i-Ahrar*, *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind* did not support the Muslim League maintaining that its leadership was not quite Islamic. Despite the opposition of these orthodox Muslim theologians (it should be noted that not all Muslim theologians were opposed to the Muslim League), the Muslim League gained the adherence of the Muslim middle class and through it the Muslim masses. To them Pakistan offered an opportunity for many-sided development without fear of Hindu competition.

For sheer practical considerations again, the Muslim League leadership could not overemphasize religion. The Muslim League leaders were drawn from both Shia and Sunni sects. Once the demand for a religious or Islamic state was made, immediately the question would arise : what brand of Islam would the new state uphold ? Again, since the leaders themselves did not observe in their personal lives the traditional Islamic rituals, how could they advocate the introduction of Islamic law and religious practice in the state which they demanded ? As stated, the leaders came from varied sectarian backgrounds. The Aga Khan was the head of the Ismaili Shias who formed a very small minority of Indian Muslims. Jinnah also came from the Bohra community, a small Shia sect of Western India. Even the poet-philosopher of Pakistan, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, though of orthodox Sunni background, was a heretic in his religious views from the standpoint of the exponents of traditional Islam. Again, Pakistan as conceived between 1940-46 would have included a substantial number of non-Muslims both in West and East Pakistan. If Pakistan was to be an Islamic state the position of the non-Muslims, who would constitute more than 30 per cent of the population, would be relegated to the status of second class citizens—the *Zimmis*. This was a position the non-Muslims were hardly expected to tolerate. It is true that Muslim League leaders from time to time would vaguely talk of 'Islamic social justice', 'Islamic democracy', and even 'Islamic socialism', but they never cared to define these terms, and what is important they never stated categorically that the laws and institutions of Pakistan would be made in accordance with the tenets of Islam. It is to be noted that the great majority of the Indian Muslims, like the Muslims in other countries, had in their social and cultural lives deviated from the traditional Islamic practice as evolved in the seventh century Arabia. This

deviation had given rise occasionally to revivalist and reactionary movements in Indian Islam as the Tariqa-i-Muhammadiya, as the so-called Wahabi movement in northern India and the Faraizi movement in Bengal during the nineteenth century, whose echoes were still heard in recent times. But such movements never succeeded in penetrating deeply into Indian Muslim society. The demand for Pakistan represented a Muslim nationalist movement rather than an Islamic religious movement.

It is significant that in the famous resolution passed by the Muslim League at its session in Lahore on 23 March 1940 in which separate homeland for the Muslims was demanded, the word 'Islam' did not occur.¹⁶ Similarly the word 'Pakistan' was not there.¹⁷

After the creation of Pakistan¹⁸ Mohammad Ali Jinnah as Governor-General made a policy statement in his Presidential address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11 August 1947. He clearly emphasized that Pakistan was not a religious state. Referring to the existence of different religious communities in Pakistan he observed :

"You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the state. ... We are starting with the fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state. ...

"Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state."¹⁹

Thus Jinnah seems to have realized clearly that if Pakistan was to exist as a modern state its basis must be secular and religion should not be allowed to be mixed up with politics.

But unfortunately, Jinnah did not live to see his ideal realized. His death in September 1948 halted the trend towards secularism. Jinnah's successors proved themselves unequal to the task of tackling the various problems facing the new-born state. The position of Pakistan had become precarious. After the partition of Bengal and the Punjab millions of refugees had begun to pour into Pakistan particularly from the border provinces of India and the great problem was how to rehabilitate them. Then there was the problem of integrating the refugees with the local population. Suspicion, jealousy and bitterness arose which even affected the government circles. The Muslim League leadership which proved to be inefficient and corrupt could not think in constructive terms. There was the vague feeling that once Pakistan was achieved everything would be all right. This naïve atti-

tude had gained ground even among educated sections of Muslims. Absence of a political philosophy and an economic programme led the Muslim League leaders to interpret Pakistan according to their own convenience, intellectual limitations and personal and group interests.

Thus, when the political leaders of Pakistan failed to define in political and economic terms the basis on which the country was to be built up, the theologians came forward with their own interpretation. They argued that since Pakistan was created as a result of a Muslim movement, it could only find its logical justification in the development of an Islamic state. By appealing to Islamic history and Islamic tradition the ulemas gave an entirely new meaning and character to the concept of Pakistan. In face of this situation the politicians were clearly on the defensive. In their anxiety to maintain themselves in power they did not hesitate to make compromises with the theologians. The influence of the ulema is clearly discernible in the Objective Resolution passed by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan at Karachi on 12 March 1949. This resolution referred to Pakistan as a state "wherein the Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accord with the teachings and requirements of Islam as set out in the Holy Quran and Sunnah."²⁰ This resolution was incorporated as the preamble to the Constitution of 1956 which proclaimed Pakistan an Islamic Republic.

It would be worthwhile to compare the Pakistani leaders with those of India. Despite the fact that the Congress was predominantly a Hindu organization the programme of the Congress has always been secular. Some of its top-ranking leaders were also Muslims. Unlike the Muslim League the Congress was clear in its political objectives. It was committed to secularism and parliamentary democracy. Soon after independence the Congress had little difficulty in framing a constitution.

The Pakistani leaders, on the other hand, had not only failed to frame a constitution (in fact it was not before 1956 that a constitution was eventually framed only to be scrapped by the army which came to power in 1958), but also had destroyed the basis on which a democratic constitution could work. By assuming the position of Governor-General Jinnah had created a rather dangerous precedent. The Governor-General or President was supposed to be a constitutional figurehead and in India he remained so. But in Pakistan with Jinnah as Governor-General. Thus after Jinnah's death, when Liaquat Ali Khan became the Prime Minister. In fact, Jinnah as Governor-General came to exercise almost dictatorial authority. It is interesting to note that in Pakistan where politics centred round personalities, the importance of an office increased or decreased with the importance of the person who held it.

Thus after Jinnah's death, when Liaquat Ali Khan became the Prime Minister, this office became more important than that of the Governor-General. After the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan, Khwaja Nazimuddin became the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and Ghulam Mohammed, a former civil servant whom Jinnah had brought into the cabinet as Finance Minister, became the Governor-General. A man of boundless ambition, he began to work on Jinnah's precedent and taking advantage of Nazimuddin's weak personality he cleverly tried to build up his power. Since he did not have any political background, he leaned heavily on the civil service and the army, dominated by the Punjabis. Politics in Pakistan had degenerated into intrigue. The ruling clique which was predominantly West Pakistani in composition, maintained itself in power by playing one group against another and using the name of Islam for political purpose. Throughout this period East Pakistan was being exploited for the benefit of West Pakistan. A sense of deprivation and frustration began to develop among the Bengalis.²¹ It was out of this feeling that Bangladesh nationalism was born. But there was a long period of groping before that phenomenon had taken shape. A new sense of awareness regarding East Bengal's separate political, economic and cultural identity had begun to manifest itself at the time of the language controversy between 1948 and 1952. The breakup of the old Muslim League and the emergence of the Awami League signified a new development in the political life of Pakistan. The hold of religion on politics was weakening and politics tended to be secular. In 1949 the Awami Muslim League was founded and soon afterwards secular organizations, such as Youth League and Ganatantri Dal, were established. In 1955 the Awami Muslim League dropped the denomination 'Muslim' from its name. In the provincial elections of 1954 the Muslim League party suffered a humiliating defeat in East Pakistan. Besides the Awami League, two other secular political parties, namely, the Krishak Sramik Party and the National Awami Party, made their appearance. The Communist Party though banned in Pakistan also increased its underground activity. The Pakistani ruling circles dominated by the army, the bureaucracy and the big business were alarmed at these new developments. The dismissal of Fazl-ul-Huq ministry in 1954, the establishment of One Unit in West Pakistan in 1956 and the imposition of Martial Law in 1958 were all parts of the same conspiracy to curb democratic and progressive forces in the country. In 1962 President Ayub Khan imposed an authoritarian constitution and instituted a system of so-called Basic Democracy. It was virtually a dictatorship under a democratic garb. The National Assembly had little power, the independence of the judiciary was severely curtailed and the executive was made all powerful. The Bengalis began to feel that only through a system of parliamentary democracy based on adult

franchise and direct elections they could expect to get their due share in the administration of the country.²²

By 1966 under the dynamic leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the Awami League had emerged as the national platform of the people of East Pakistan. The Six-points²³ (formulated by the Awami League) represented a programme for political and economic development within a broad democratic framework.

The elections held in December 1970 demonstrated clearly that the people were overwhelmingly behind the secular political programme of the Awami League. The Muslim League and the religious parties like the *Jamat-i-Islami* were totally rejected by the electorate. The ruling military junta of Pakistan which had so long been exploiting the people by appealing to their religious sentiments got unnerved. They were unwilling to accept the reality of the situation. On 25 March 1971 the Pakistani army struck at the Bengali population in a treacherous and ruthless manner. It was the most gruesome genocide in history, and it shocked the conscience of the world. But the people of Bengal were determined to resist the tyranny. The war of national liberation had started which culminated in the creation of an independent Bangladesh.

With the emergence of Bangladesh as a nation state the entire perspective of the history of the subcontinent has changed. The rise of Bengali nationalism cutting across religious barriers has added a new dimension to social and political reality. Hindu-Muslim communalism which had been the dominant feature of the political and social life of the subcontinent now seems to be a thing of the past. Nationalism in both India and Bangladesh is firmly rooted in secularism. Both the countries are now united by common bonds of friendship—a friendship sanctified by common struggle and common suffering for upholding common ideals of secularism, democracy and socialism.

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⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Maulvi Ahmad, a municipal councillor of Calcutta, told Blunt that for the Muslims it was "impossible to combine with the Hindus who were so selfish, they wanted every post for themselves." W. S. Blunt, *India Under Ripon*, T. Fisher Unwin, London, 1909, p. 110.

⁶ F. B. Bradley-Birt, *Twelve Men of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century*, S. K. Lahiri and Co., Calcutta, 1910, p. 98.



⁷ Letter of Abdul Latif to Secretaries of the Indian National Congress, 22 December 1866, quoted in Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 315.

⁸ The Report of the Committee of Central National Muhammadan Association for 1885-1888, quoted in K. K. Aziz (ed.), *Ameer Ali : His Life and Work*, United Publishers, Lahore, 1968, p. 315.

⁹ Abdul Hamid came of a respectable Bengali Muslim family of Jessore district. He was an M.A. in English from Calcutta University, and was the editor of *The Moslem Chronicle* from 1895 to 1906. He was a member of the Provincial Committee of the All-India Muslim League founded in Dacca in 1906. The author is indebted to his colleague, Professor Abu Imam of the Department of History, Rajshahi University, for showing him photo copies of the old issues of *The Moslem Chronicle* which he had obtained from the India Office Library, London.

¹⁰ Sir John Strachey, *India*, London, 1888, p. 225.

¹¹ Among the few Muslim leaders who supported the Congress and had joined the anti-partition movement was Abdul Rasul, Bar-at-Law, from Comilla.

¹² Soon after the partition was announced a series of articles entitled 'Reflections on the Partition' appeared in *The Moslem Chronicle* criticizing the partition scheme. See *The Moslem Chronicle*, Calcutta, August 5, 12, 19, 1905.

¹³ M. N. Das, *India under Morley and Minto : Politics behind Revolution*.

¹⁴ Rabindranath Tagore, *Kalantar*, Tagore Centenary edition, Visvabharati, 1961, p. 40.

¹⁵ Correspondence between W. A. J. Archibold, Principal of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh and Col. Dunlop Smith, private secretary to the Viceroy, Lord Minto, clearly indicates that the English Secretary of the Aligarh College played an important part not only in organizing the Muslim deputation but drafting the memorial. See S. R. Wasti, *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1965, p. 229.

¹⁶ The Muslim League resolution stated : "Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial re-adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign..." Waheed-us-Zawan, *Towards Pakistan*, United Publishers, Lahore, 1964, p. 196.

¹⁷ The term Pakistan was coined by Choudhury Rahmat Ali who led a Muslim student group in Cambridge in 1933. But Rahmat Ali's conception of Pakistan and the Muslim League demand were not identical.

¹⁸ Pakistan which emerged as a separate state on 14 August 1947 was not formed strictly according to the Lahore Resolution of 1940. The Muslim League resolution had envisaged two 'independent and sovereign' States, one in the north-west embracing the whole of the Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and the N.W.F.P., and the other in the east covering the whole of Bengal and Assam. In early 1946 at the Muslim League Legislators' Convention at Delhi, the Lahore resolution was amended in favour of one State. Abul Hashim, General Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League, protested against this amendment which he considered to be irregular on the ground that only in a full-fledged Muslim League Council meeting could such an amendment be moved. But his objection was overruled by Jinnah. This information was conveyed to the author by Abul Hashim.



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¹⁹ Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, *Speeches as Governor-General of Pakistan 1947-48*, Pakistan Publications, Karachi, n.d., p. 9.

²⁰ L. Binder, *Religion and Politics in Pakistan*, University of California Press, Berkley and Los Angeles, 1963, p. 143.

²¹ For details regarding the exploitation of East Pakistan and the growth of regionalist feeling, Safar A. Akanda, op. cit.

²² ibid., p. 265.

²³ For details regarding Six-points, '6-Point Formula—Our Right to Live' by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, *Bangladesh Documents*, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 1971, pp. 23-33.

Nationalism, Secularism and Democracy in Bangladesh

AMAL KUMAR MUKHOPADHYAY

AFTER WINNING a heroic war against a heartless military junta, Bangladesh is now in the throes of a rebirth. It is a rebirth in the sense that her social and political life which for long had floundered in a climate of colonial oppression have now to be given new dimensions. The task ahead is to erect a happy, healthy and prosperous state and society in Bangladesh; this will require continuous efforts, careful planning, rich imagination and, above all, a spirit of dedication. People of Bangladesh must not forget that the whole world which during their struggle for liberation largely remained non-plussed are now closely watching how this newly independent state makes her progress and that there are not a few states in the world which will not spare a moment to raise a duststorm of criticism in case of any lapse in the forward march of Bangladesh. There must, therefore, be caution from the very start.

Fortunately for Bangladesh, at the dawn of her independence, she seems to be enjoying certain advantages of a type which none of the recently liberated Afro-Asian states has had the good luck of having fully within her reach. The first advantage is that it is a country characterized by geographical and ethnic homogeneity, evenness of climate and smallness of area. Such a land and its people, no doubt, provide an ideal laboratory for the experiment of novel social and political norms. Things which one cannot venture to experiment in a large country marked by myriad diversities in view of their inevitably slow and belated

results might easily and fruitfully be given effect to in a country like Bangladesh. Secondly, the full history of the twenty-five years of independent India is just before her eyes and a careful analysis of this history should be of immense relevance to the reconstruction of Bangladesh. It is from a study of this history that people of Bangladesh may learn about the mistakes we have done in India in the last twenty-five years and remain careful to keep clear of them. Thirdly, it has often been found that whenever a country is liberated from a foreign rule it becomes impossible for it to throw away completely the ideas and systems carefully implanted in that country by the foreign masters. People become so used to the pattern of society and administration left by the departing masters that legacies from the past die hard. It is exactly this sort of difficulty that we in India have faced in the past and are still not totally immune from it. But, thanks to the stupid measures of the Pak authorities, Bangladesh is unlikely to have this problem. The colossal genocide committed by the Pak authorities in Bangladesh has made the people there so abhorrent to their past masters that it will not be an overstatement to say that in Bangladesh legacies of the Pakistan Raj have been permanently buried along with the butchered bodies of three million Bengalis. Thus Bangladesh today has started her journey with a mind free from all attachment to the ideas and institutions of the past masters and it is, no doubt, a unique situation. But far more unique is the Bengali nationalism which, in fact, has no parallel in modern history. For nine crucial months the seventy-five millions of people in Bangladesh have fought an enemy just as one people with one mind, one language and one goal. This strong sense of nationalism, one may naturally expect, will be a moving force in the future development of Bangladesh and it is, therefore, proper to give a closer look at the character of this nationalism.

Growth of a strong nationalism among a people in the face of a continuous colonial oppression is nothing new in history. Indeed, twentieth century has witnessed again and again how in different Afro-Asian countries economic exploitation of colonial powers has sharpened the edge of nationalism and also how this awakened nationalism has done miracles in uniting the people of these countries in their struggle for independence. One may be tempted to treat the nationalism of Bangladesh just as one in line with this general pattern. But that would hardly be a right and total assessment of the qualities of nationalism in Bangladesh. As a matter of fact, the whole process of the growth of nationalism in Bangladesh, when closely analysed, would reveal a peculiar trait that must be of immense interest to those who are concerned to keep nationalism on a healthy base and to arrest its degeneration into a senseless jingoism or a lifeless paper-principle.

The trouble with nationalism is that it is essentially a creed of the

crowd or the masses. That is to say, the spirit of nationalism may be infused within popular thinking by a Mazzini or a Gandhi or a Nasser by their respective techniques of moving the masses, but until and unless the whole people—most of whom have the impulses of ordinary mortals—are effectively swayed and accordingly take actions nationalism cannot be said to have attained the effective stage. Hence there is always the possibility that the nationalism of a people will be surcharged with popular emotions. At times, this emotional factor may be of great benefit. It may enable a people to give their unified resistance to a foreign ruler; it may help the leadership of a country to rally the masses round them during war or any other similar national crisis. But once these exigencies are over, chances are that this emotional fire of nationalism may be extinct with the effect that the same people who once fought an invader or a foreign ruler may now appear pathetically confused, divided and weakened. A foolish leadership may make such a situation further worse; in order to whet again a strong nationalist sentiment among the people it may desperately try to cash in on religion or on the projection of an imaginary enemy or may preach a provocative ideology. But each of these measures, in its turn, only helps in nakedly exposing the bankruptcy in the life of a nation. Hitler's Germany, Soekarno's Indonesia and Mr. Bhutto's present Pakistan are classic examples of that. By all these arguments the point we are trying to make is that nationalism to be really effective, healthy and fruitful must have a rational and substantial foundation. It is on this point that one may derive a good lesson from the history of the growth of nationalism in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh nationalism has grown for years on a cultural plane and it was only when this cultural foundation was firmly laid that nationalism in Bangladesh burst forth into a total resistance against the Pak rulers. The people of the then East Pakistan, just after the creation of Pakistan, had an inkling of the Pak rulers' intentions to usurp their cultural autonomy in the name of national unity and an agitation of the students of Dacca University on December 5, 1947 made it clear to the authorities that the people of East Bengal would not tolerate it. The protest of the people assumed a more organized shape in 1948 when Jinnah wanted to impose Urdu on the Bengalis, and reached its culmination in February 1952 when students and youths in East Bengal sacrificed their lives to retain the honour and status of their mother-tongue. It was not simply an agitation for a language, but more than that. It was actually a crusade to protect the character of Bengali culture. In this battle the Pak authorities lost the first round in as far as they had to accord due recognition to the Bengali language. But they did not just sit idle. They deployed all possible machineries to thwart the growth of Bengali culture with the aid of the Bengali language. In the name of Islam they tried to bring about a radical linguistic reorientation

in East Bengal by forcing a stupid admixture of Urdu with Bengali and also to alter the culture pattern of the people there. But the more and more this repression went on, the more and more Bengalis became conscious of their own cultural heritage and in course of time there came about a silent cultural revolution throughout East Bengal.

It is this cultural revolution that will largely explain the richness of the nationalism of the presentday Bangladesh. A well-grown culture may have far-reaching consequences on the society and politics of a country. In the first place, it may have a tremendous liberalizing influence on the attitudes of a people. By breaking the barriers of dogma, prejudice and orthodox beliefs it may bring in dynamic waves in the social life of people. Secondly, a broad-based culture founded on a common linguistic base contributes to the growth of a stable integration of a people which is the *sine qua non* for the growth of a healthy and potent nationalism. Thirdly, culture furnishes a people with a kind of equipment which it is hard to liquidate with all possible machineries of torture.

Bangladesh provides a living example of all these powerful influences of culture. From the very beginning the Pak authorities tried to build Pakistan on a feverish religious frenzy. To them it was just a strategic necessity. Invoking Islam they continuously tried to carry on a ruthless economic exploitation of East Bengal. But the people of East Bengal could finally throw away the fetters of this so-called religious fanaticism just because of a liberalism brought about by a cultural renaissance in East Bengal. Had it been otherwise, it would, undoubtedly, take them long to understand the extent and implications of the persistent economic exploitation by the western wing of Pakistan. Secondly, it was the vigour of Bengali culture that was mainly responsible for a remarkable integration of the people—an integration, acid-tested during their liberation-struggle in the last year. And it was also because of their cultural strength that the people of Bangladesh could bravely face the guns of the military junta and finally silence them.

This cultural nationalism of the people in Bangladesh has not only inspired a political movement there, but has as well promoted a process of social change. The Indian subcontinent, for long, has been an unfortunate victim of religious fanaticism. The closing years of the struggle against the British Raj were sullied by the horrors of religious madness. It was this madness that played a major role in the birth of Pakistan and, further, worked as a major impediment against a healthy neighbourliness between India and Pakistan. Pakistan was made a theocratic state and the authorities at the top did everything to work up a stubborn religious bellicosity. But as far as the people of East Bengal were concerned, as we have indicated earlier, this planned design to develop an atmosphere of religious fanaticism finally proved abortive. The cultural movement that began in East Bengal in 1948 and was

refurbished during the eventful years of the fifties was a main factor in arresting the evil influences of religion on the social life. In the sixties, in the face of ruthless regimentation in the cultural field, the educated Bengalis, completely fed up with the imposed culture of the authorities, were found starving for the ideas of Bengali poets, litterateurs and essayists like Michael Madhusudan Dutta, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Nazrul Islam, Jibanananda Das and many others. To them these literary figures were no longer Hindus or Muslims; they were just the pioneers of Bengali culture and literature. This was indeed the beginning of a perspective of secularism in Bangladesh.

The religious fanaticism which was thus considerably tamed by a fine cultural awakening was finally eradicated in Bangladesh, ironically enough, by the Pak authorities themselves. The barbarous atrocities committed by the Pak soldiers proved once and for all that religion can never serve as a stable basis of the social and political life of a modern nation. Murder and torture of their wives, children and brethren by people of the same religion provided to the people of Bangladesh a conclusive evidence that the erstwhile call for the unity of Islam continuously given by the authorities of Pakistan was nothing but a big hoax, that religion, basically a private matter of the individual, should never be allowed to work as the guiding principle of a modern political society. People of Bangladesh have paid a big price—three millions of human lives, to be precise—to realize this truth.

After all this sacrifice, Bangladesh today has taken secularism as one of her declared public policies. One may hope with reason that this secularism will be more than a mere paper-principle in Bangladesh. Indeed, as we have seen above, in Bangladesh secularism has been a hard-fought ideal and not a just emotion-oriented slogan. Ordinary people, through their struggle and sacrifice, have well realized the values of secularism. What remains to be seen, however, is how the leadership in Bangladesh build the state and society according to their declared ideal of secularism.

In a secular state religion is taken as a private ground where the state has no business to tread. An individual citizen is known and rewarded in terms of his worth and not in terms of his religion and the State, further, makes no discrimination on grounds of religion. In a state where there is religious homogeneity, as in the European states, it is comparatively easy to maintain a secular policy. Complications are likely to arise in a state with multi-religious people as in India. In India we have tried to maintain a secular state by guaranteeing the right to freedom of religion to every citizen and also by guaranteeing cultural and educational rights of religious minorities. But it would be concealing the truth, if we argue that the twenty-five years of Indian government have established a right atmosphere of secularism in our country. In

our social dealings religion still plays an important role ; even politics of India is influenced by religious considerations. On many occasions in the past religion has been found to have been an important factor in controlling the voting pattern of the people in India. Leaders of Bangladesh should take into account the Indian experience in this matter.

In India the major mistake we have made in this regard is that we have been carried away by the belief that constitutional guarantees and institutional measures alone are capable of bringing about a desired social change. We have thought that if the state maintains a strict neutrality in matters of religion, gives equal opportunities to all religious communities and tolerates equally the various religious practices subject to the limits of public order and decency, there will be secularism all around. But this is far from true. A true secular society can grow up only when an all-out effort is made to bring up a society where people make their judgements strictly on the basis of rational and utilitarian considerations instead of on the basis of reverence and irrational faith. In other words, there must be a determined effort to usher in a social order suitable for the growth of a scientific attitude among the people. Thus to grow a genuine secularism in Bangladesh the leaders there would do well by relying less on constitutional and institutional measures and by giving greater emphasis on evolving adequate instruments of social change wedded to the growth of a scientific and rational attitude of the people. Education, undoubtedly, is the foremost among these instruments of social change. The whole pattern and structure of education in Bangladesh should, therefore, be so reoriented that people may fast develop a strictly secular approach to the contemporary social and political realities.

If a true secular society grows up in Bangladesh, that will, indeed, be an ideal social framework for the development of democracy which is another proclaimed ideal of the people of Bangladesh. Leaders of Bangladesh have already indicated their preference for a parliamentary democracy. There are obvious reasons for this choice of theirs. During the first twenty-four years of independent Pakistan parliamentary democracy was never allowed to function and when this background is borne in mind it is not difficult to understand why the leaders of Bangladesh today want to go in for a parliamentary democracy. But it must be remembered that setting up of parliamentary democracy will not automatically bring in an effective democracy in Bangladesh. Parliamentary democracy, after all, is an institutional arrangement which may not bear much fruit unless it grows up at the social level. Democracy is basically a way of life and that way of life must be given a concrete shape among the members of a society ; this is a task for which considerable planned activity in the social front is vitally necessary. If, therefore, democracy is to be made really meaningful in Bangladesh,

adequate attention should be given to reorient the pattern of society in right directions.

A true democracy can hardly thrive in a society stricken by poverty and hunger. Efforts, therefore, should be made in Bangladesh to eradicate the poverty of the general masses. And to achieve this, economic forces must be properly regulated so that there is a permanent stoppage of concentration of wealth in a few hands leading to an even distribution of national wealth. To do this a liberal constitution on the model of the U.S.A. or the U.K. may not help very much. In India after setting up a parliamentary democracy of the Westminster model we have now begun to realize this truth and are now busy in changing the provisions of our Constitution to secure real social and economic equality. Bangladesh should take a lesson and act accordingly. Again, if occupational hierarchies are allowed to act as an incentive to social stratification, a society can hardly be democratic. The institutional arrangements should, therefore, be such that occupations are only taken as a means of livelihood and not as a criterion of social status. In other words, the whole of society must be guided by one uniform standard. Bangladesh has already developed a fine humanism and if through the development of a scientific pattern of education and the dissemination of a rational culture this humanism is firmly rooted in society, then this humanism may act as a major operative force in democratizing the character of society.

Parliamentary democracy has a natural tendency to give rise to an *élite* government. This political elitism, on its part, may contribute to the growth of elitism at the social level. So long as a Cabinet can manage to enjoy a majority support in the legislature it may go on functioning in an authoritarian style leaving the people outside the arena of decision-making and if this situation is allowed to continue, it may so happen that people's participation in government remains only within the extent of taking part in the ritual of periodic elections. The net outcome of this may be a general alienation of the ordinary people from the political life of the country. Once this trend is set it is bound to have its effect in the social sphere. That is to say, the political elitism growing under the arrangement of parliamentary democracy will inevitably lead to a concentration of power in the social front as well with the ultimate effect that the mute masses, both politically and socially, become a denied class. The persistent tension generated by the frustration of these alienated masses may at one point ignite a fire which may threaten the very existence of the democratic structure.

To grow democracy within the framework of a Cabinet Government is, therefore, not an easy task and the leaders of Bangladesh would do well if they, from the very start, could take necessary safeguards against the possible degeneration of their proposed parlia-

mentary democracy into a crass plutocracy. One of the most important safeguards is to make out a comprehensive scheme for a wide diffusion of political and social power. Diffusion of political power may be secured by a well thought-out plan of political decentralization. If the machineries of local self-government are allowed to grow with substantial authority and powers and if suitable conditions are created so that ordinary people may have a free entry into that area of power and authority, then political power is unlikely to concentrate at a few select points. Constitution makers in Bangladesh should, therefore, see that there are in the constitution adequate provisions for the effective working of a very powerful local self-government.

Diffusion of social power is more difficult to achieve as it is a problem one can hardly hope to combat by a set of constitutional and political arrangements; for this what is required is a suitable social pattern. One must not forget that like India Bangladesh has deep-rooted traditional society with a predominantly agricultural set-up. A traditional society, by nature, tends to be an authoritarian society and, moreover, since an agricultural social set-up breeds rigidity the authoritarian order in such a background must be a hard nut to crack. One of the important tasks in Bangladesh today is to make a breakthrough in this social pattern and diffuse the social power widely among the people. An effective education, a broad-based secular culture, a structural change in the pattern of landholding, incentives to the growth of various voluntary associations where ordinary people may play an active role in the process of decision-making of different social units may serve as some of the important instruments of this desired social change.

Experiences in parliamentary democracies have shown that bureaucratic control and authority may sometimes pose a threat to the growth of a true democratic order. Hence one of the urgent needs in Bangladesh today is the creation of a new pattern of civil service suitable for the realization of the democratic ideal. Civil service in Pakistan has had a murky history. Since democracy has been withheld in Pakistan for a long time civil servants there have naturally made themselves the invincible guardians of society. People of Bangladesh have had the bad luck of having a taste of the bitter fruits of this authoritarian civil service. One hopes that in the light of this experience Bangladesh will now be able to realize the possible dangers of bureaucracy and will take move to introduce a new pattern of civil service. The basic thing that ought to be done in this regard is a planned decentralization in the structure of civil service so that administrative authority and control do not rest at a few hands at the top. Public accountability of civil servants should also be introduced; such a measure will, no doubt, help in keeping bureaucracy under constant democratic checks. Thirdly, suitable machineries should be evolved so that there emerges no commu-

nication gap between civil servants on the one hand and people on the other. Fourthly, there could be consultative committees attached to various departments of government and experts in different fields should be drawn to these committees; further, these committees should be given such a status so that bureaucrats may not override their advice by a mere stroke of pen. Above all, a genuine democratic spirit should be allowed to grow within the corridors of power. That is to say, if a berth in civil service does not give someone a special status in society, civil servants will automatically learn to treat themselves as true public servants.

The question of leadership has an important relevance to the problem of the success of democracy. Many of the maladies of a democracy may easily be overcome, if it works under a right kind of leadership. Indeed, a system fails not only because of its inherent difficulties, but also because of the defects of the men who run it. Democracy, therefore, can never succeed unless it is in right hands. Bangladesh is fortunate to have in Sheikh Mujibur Rahman an outstanding leader of our time. His heroic role in East Bengal's long and difficult struggle for democracy and freedom, his passionate love for the land and people of Bangladesh, his fondness of the Bengali language and culture, his fine humanism, his ability to communicate freely with the ordinary masses, his dedication to the cause of liberty, equality and fraternity prove beyond doubt that he possesses all the qualities that make one an effective leader of a democracy. Bangladesh, therefore, has nothing to despair.

P. SHARAN

Nationalism, Secularism and Democracy in Bangladesh

THE EMERGENCE of Bangladesh, the birth of a new nation in the Indian subcontinent, is a great event. The leaders of Bangladesh have declared in unequivocal terms their adherence to the ideals of nationalism, secularism and democracy. They are not only the three pillars of the new nation but they will also be the guiding principles of government and politics in Bangladesh. Here we shall examine the factors that led to the rise of nationalism in that land.

The Muslims in the united Bengal before partition were so much occupied with the problem of asserting themselves *vis-à-vis* Hindu Bengalis that they tried to identify themselves with their co-religionists in other parts of the country. Consequently, most of them actively participated in the movement for the partition of India under the leadership of the Muslim League. Historically, the seeds of communalism had been sown by the Britishers in Bengal and the Muslim League as a political party was founded in Dacca in 1906 to foster it. The first communal riots (1918) took place in Calcutta. Soon after partition of the country, Bengal witnessed the highest bloodshed due to communal riots. The Muslim League leaders had persuaded the East Bengalis to join Pakistan in the name of Islam; and the Pakistani rulers made a promise of brotherhood to the Muslims of East Bengal. The Quaid-i-Azam had declared more than once that Pakistan would be a democratic state, that the Government in Pakistan would be run by the people and that the difficulties faced by the labourers and the students would be removed.

The people of Pakistan achieved their freedom as a by-product of the Indian nationalist movement. They searched for an identity and a common bond, which they found, at that time, in Islam. But, as was expected, the bond of common religion did not prove strong enough to hold them together for long. Actually, Pakistan was one State, but not one nation. "We Indians are basically one people though we speak different languages, profess different religions, and have different modes of life. We are engaged in the common task of economic and social development. What binds us all together is faith in certain ideals and aims. Religion or language alone cannot be a basis for unity. People have to rise above these things. Religion is good, and everyone must be faithful to his or her religion. But you cannot build a nation on the principle of a single religion. We said this at the time of the formation of Pakistan, but the British and others did not listen to us."¹

Bengalis are deeply conscious that they belong to a distinct cultural group. They regard their language as one of the most beautiful languages and boast of the heights of literary excellence it has reached. An East Bengal writer describes his people thus : "They are not Aryans nor Arabs. Their body and their mind have been formed by the soft soil of East Bengal, by its wide blue sky, its murmuring rivers, its warm benevolent sun, its pleasant breeze, and its splendid seasons. Nature has given their mind and body a distinctive stamp."²

Fearing that the Bengali Muslim's love for his language might lead to the emergence of Bengali nationalism, Jinnah declared in an address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly that Urdu and no other language could be the national language of Pakistan. When Jinnah reaffirmed this decision in his Convocation Address at Dacca University in March 1948, some students shouted : "No, No". Later the students also held demonstrations in the streets against the Governor-General. But the Government and Muslim League Press invented the philologically absurd theory that Bengali was a Hindu language without having any notion of what the Muslim Bengalis thought about their native language.³

The Pakistan Government's attempt to impose Urdu on the Bengalis as the national language sparked off a cultural revolution in East Bengal. The Bengali language which in pre-Independence days was regarded by many Bengali Muslims as part of Hindu culture, and offshoot of Sanskrit, now became a powerful symbol of Bengali culture and nationalism. Rabindranath Tagore became their deity more than ever before. The true East Bengali character and make-up are revealed from Tagore's song "*Amar Sonar Bangla, Ami Tomai Bhalobasi*", which has now been adopted by the leaders and people of Bangladesh as their national anthem.

Even the recognition of Bengali as a national language along with

Urdu in 1954 did not settle the question, because the official announcement suggested that it was only an interim arrangement, which would hold good till a final decision was taken on the matter. The Bengali Muslim's suspicion about West Pakistan deepened when the Muslim League Parliamentary Party's decision to recognize Bengali as a state language provoked anti-Bengali demonstrations in Karachi in April 1954. When in June 1967 the Government of Pakistan put a ban on the singing of Tagore's songs over the radio, the Bengali Muslims' linguistic patriotism reached its peak. They gradually felt the need for spelling out their ideas on their culture and social values. They realized that in order to fulfil their political aspirations they must first have a cultural renaissance to sustain their new sense of nationhood. They, therefore, began asking for a new civil order because they had a new awareness of their social and cultural identity. Thus the language issue gave the first unifying platform to all the East Bengalis as well as all opposition parties in Pakistan.

Bengali nationalism showed signs of a new self-awareness at the time of Indo-Pak war in 1965. Far from benefiting from a colossal expenditure on defence, East Bengal found itself undefended and exposed to danger, as only one army division was posted in the province. It was India's self-imposed restraint that saved East Bengal from war on that occasion. The Indo-Pak war convinced the Bengalis more than ever before that their country was nothing more than a colonial appendage to West Pakistan, which considered that a war gamble over Kashmir deserved a priority over the external security of East Bengal.⁴

West Pakistan is five times the size of East Bengal and its density of population is 200 per sq. mile, while the density of population in East Bengal is 1290. While West Pakistan cultivates only 24.5% of its total area, East Bengal cultivates 63.6%. Economic grievances of East Bengalis naturally prompted them to raise the question of racial and cultural differences in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in the mid-fifties. On 16 January 1956 Abdul Mansur Ahmed said in that Assembly that while East Bengal's contribution to the federal revenues in the period between 1947 and 1955 was 168 crores 14 lakhs the Central Government's expenditure on this wing during the same period was 42 crores and 66 lakhs against 790 crores 67 lakhs spent on West Pakistan. It had been increasingly felt that the economic and political interests of East Pakistan had been systematically subordinated to those of West Pakistan. Even the Central Government's highest planning body took notice of the widening economic disparities between the two wings. A recent report by a panel of experts to the Planning Commission of the Government of Pakistan showed that while the average (per capita) income in the West was 32% higher than in the East in 1959-60, the disparity had almost doubled to 61% ten years later in 1969-70.

East Bengalis made three instruments of Central Government policy responsible for their plight : (1) Pakistan's scant investible resources, plus foreign aid, were directed mainly towards the development of West Pakistan, to the comparative neglect of East Pakistan. (2) Particularly the earnings of East Pakistan's foreign trade were diverted to finance imports to West Pakistan. (3) Pakistan's economic policy went in favour of West Pakistan at the expense of the East. Tariff, import controls, and discriminating industrial license compelled East Pakistan to purchase from West Pakistan commodities which she could have obtained cheaply in the world markets.

The dominance of West Pakistan over the Central Government facilitated her economic exploitation of East Pakistan. Since 1958, the military regime had continued existence, though modifications were made from time to time and the decision-making authority lay with the well-entrenched Civil Service and their military bosses. All senior military members of the administration had been West Pakistanis. Of the senior officers in the Central Civil service, 87% were West Pakistani in 1960, and the proportion had not changed much since then. The Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and the Central Finance Minister, the key individuals in resource allocation, had always been West Pakistanis. Moreover, the location of the Central Government in West Pakistan had encouraged the concentration of industrial and the entrepreneur class in West Pakistan.³

The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan was reconstituted in June 1955 and on June 6 that year Governor's rule was withdrawn from East Bengal. The sharpest voice in the reconstituted Constituent Assembly was the voice of a Bengali whose resentment against West Pakistan's treatment of East Bengal found clear expression in the House. On 7 September 1955 Ataur Rahman Khan said : "Sir, the attitude of the Muslim League coterie here was of contempt towards East Bengal, towards its culture, its language, its literature, and everything concerning East Bengal. . . . In fact, Sir, I tell you that far from considering East Bengal as an equal partner, the leaders of the Muslim League thought that we were a subject race and they belonged to the race of conquerors."⁴

East Bengali nationalism was increasingly fed and strengthened by West Pakistani colonial repression. Provoked by and threatened with the erosion of their very identity, the Bengalis reacted sharply. "In the resultant struggle for emancipation, as Mujibur Rahman called it, they clutched at every mark of Bengali individuality. The hatred towards the Bengali was total : his culture was belittled, his efficiency suspected and even his eating habits and his way of life were held in the greatest contempt. As a result of all these factors, there developed, over the painful years, a seething hatred towards West Pakistan." The observer concluded : "The revolution in Bangladesh is not merely against exploitation

by West Pakistan ... it is to preserve our race, our language, our culture that we are fighting for. Once and for all, we wish to break the myth created by the British, and propagated by the West Pakistanis, that Bengalis, in some inexplicable way, are inferior, and prove to all that the awakened Bengali is a viable force to contend with.”

The West Pakistani colonialists tried another trick to divide the ranks of the nationalist forces in East Bengal; they tried to introduce separate electorates, which the British imperialists had practised in India of pre-Independence days so successfully. But in the face of the united opposition of Bengalis, they failed in their plot. Further, like the Jews of Nazi Germany, the helpless Hindu minority in East Bengal came in handy as a convenient target to divert people's attention from their genuine grievances. The Pakistani authorities for long tried to get rid of the considerable Hindu minority. The Pakistani education authorities also ordered that all text-books for Pakistan's schools should be 'screened' with a view to seeing that they conformed to 'the ideology of Pakistan'.

The two-nation theory on which Pakistan was based was buried for ever at the birth of the new nation in Bangladesh. Some people in India and elsewhere thought that Bengali nationalism might lead to a demand for the formation of a United Bengal; but there is no such possibility. East Bengal Muslims have struggled hard and made great sacrifices for self-identity in their own region and for economic salvation for themselves. At the same time West Bengal Hindus do not look forward to a reunion with the East Bengali Muslims, as this would upset the political equilibrium in the state and create new problems. The new nation consists of a vast majority of Muslims and a considerable minority of Hindus. Both the communities have undergone great sufferings and humiliations under the domination of West Pakistan. People of Bangladesh have fought shoulder to shoulder against Pakistani army and have at last won their freedom by shedding their blood. Muslims of Bangladesh are fully conscious of the fact that their own co-religionists subjected them to all sorts of indignities and tortures. They also recognize that the Government and people of India not only gave refuge to about 10 million Bengalis, who had to leave their hearth and home, but also rendered them all sorts of help in their war of independence. These factors have strengthened the bonds of friendship between the Governments and peoples of the two lands. Another cementing force is the common belief of the leaders of the two countries in the ideals of secularism and democracy.

The Manifesto of the All-Pakistan Awami League issued on 6 June 1970 stated: "The promise that independence held for them was the promise of a new society, of the establishment of a real living democracy, in which people would live in freedom and in which justice and

equality would prevail. The promise has yet to be fulfilled. Democracy itself was not allowed to take root and power which rightfully belonged to the people was usurped by one coterie after another. These coteries engaged themselves in the naked pursuit of their own narrow interests leading to the consolidation of political power and the concentration of wealth in their hands, while the forgotten millions of Pakistan were reduced to mere objects of exploitation. . . . A real living democracy shall be established in which people shall live in freedom and with dignity, and in which justice and equality shall prevail.

"Islam is the deeply cherished faith of the overwhelming majority of the people. Awami League affirms that a clear guarantee shall be embodied in the Constitution to the effect that no law repugnant to the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Quran and Sunnah shall be enacted or enforced in Pakistan. The sanctity of the religious institutions shall be constitutionally guaranteed. Adequate provisions shall be made for extending religious education at all levels.

"Minorities shall enjoy complete equality before the law and the equal protection of the law. They shall enjoy the full rights of citizenship. Their right to profess, practise and propagate their respective religions and their right to establish and manage their religious institutions and to impart religious education to the members of their faith shall be constitutionally guaranteed. No person shall be required to pay a tax to propagate any religion other than his own. No person shall be required to receive instruction or to take part in religious worship or ceremony, if such instruction or ceremony relates to a religion other than his own."

Another important party in East Bengal, the National Awami Party, also stands for establishing a national democratic set-up in the country, in which the people will have democratic rights and freedoms, freedom of press, speech, assembly, demonstration, political and trade union activities. In establishing such a national government, the Party believes in the alliance of the workers, peasants, national capitalists, the middle class and the intelligentsia. The Party believes that representation in the National Assembly should be on the basis of universal adult franchise so that the sovereign Parliament may be really sovereign and representative of the people according to population.

The formidable obstacle in the way of the East Bengalis realizing their legitimate political aspirations was the powerful opposition of the military-bureaucratic-industrial complex which was firmly ensconced in the seats of power in Pakistan. The advent of democracy spelt death to their interests. The army's prejudice against democracy, and the bureaucracy's distrust of it, plus the industrialists' vested interests in the *status quo* — all three exclusively West Pakistanis — brought together three most powerful interests in the life of Pakistan to forge a united

front ranged against the consummation of East Bengals' democratic demand. The fulfilment of those aspirations would have ushered in democracy in Pakistan. But this would have meant the shifting of political power to East Bengal.

The political programmes of the East Pakistan Awami League announced in 1953 and of the Krishak Sramik Party founded on 23 September that year were drawn up with a view to ending the economic exploitation and political domination of East Pakistan by West Pakistan. The only means of ending it was autonomy. On 16 November 1953 the East Bengal Awamis asked for complete regional autonomy. The 12-point programme of the Krishak Sramik Party included a similar demand. Finally, the 21-point charter of the United Front spelt out certain features of the proposed autonomy very close to economic independence. This Front routed the Muslim League in the general election in East Bengal in 1954. Four of these 21 points were (1) complete autonomy for East Pakistan in all matters except defence, foreign policy and currency; (2) complete freedom from the Centre with regard to the export of jute; (3) consultation between the Centre and East Pakistan on the allocation of foreign exchange; and (4) the abolition of all existing restrictions on trade between East and West Bengal.

The Round Table Conference which met in Rawalpindi on 10 March 1969 was designed by the ruling classes and their supporters in the army to give the bureaucracy a breathing time for planning a fresh assault on the forces of democracy. When Martial Law was imposed on the country on 25 March 1969 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's 6-point programme became the battle-cry of the people of East Bengal. First enunciated on 12 February 1966, the six points of the Awami League were: (1) The Constitution should provide for a federation of Pakistan in the true sense on the basis of the Lahore Resolution and for a parliamentary form of government based on the supremacy of a directly elected legislature on the basis of universal adult franchise. (2) The federal government shall deal only with two subjects—defence and foreign affairs—with all residuary subjects vested in the federating States. (3) There should be either two separate freely convertible currencies for the two wings or one currency with two separate reserve banks to prevent inter-wing flight of capital. (4) The power of taxation and revenue collection shall vest in the federating units. The federal government will receive a share to meet its financial obligations. (5) Economic disparities between the two wings shall disappear through a series of economic, fiscal and legal reforms. (6) A militia or paramilitary force must be created in East Pakistan which at present has no defence of its own.

In his broadcast to the nation on 28 March 1970, two days after

assuming President's office, General Yahya Khan issued the Legal Framework Order promising a general election. This legal framework designed by a soldier was more consistent with martial law than with civil law. It was a fraud on the nation ; and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman saw through the trick. But he decided to contest the elections on the 6-point programme to consolidate the democratic forces in East Bengal and to confront the West Pakistani ruling classes in a final showdown. The Awami League led by the Sheikh won 167 out of 169 seats reserved for East Bengal in the National Assembly of 313 seats and 288 out of 300 seats in the Provincial Assembly. It was naturally expected that in accordance with the traditions of parliamentary democracy, and in deference to the unequivocal wishes of the people, the official promises would be honoured and the leader of the majority party in the National Assembly, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, would be invited to form a representative government. But the West Pakistani ruling clique and the army decided on a policy of subterfuge and deliberately temporized on the question of summoning the Assembly. When on 13 February 1971 the President announced that the National Assembly would meet on 3 March he knew that he could change the date on any excuse. He postponed the date on 1 March.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Awami League chief, while talking to the pressmen after the parliamentary party meeting at Hotel Purbani following the announcement of the postponement of the National Assembly session, said that he was prepared to make all possible sacrifices for the emancipation of the 70 million Bengalis. He further said that a united fight would have to be given to end the colonial treatment to which Bengalis had been subjected for the last 23 years. He observed : "Democracy demands that the voice of the majority should be accepted. But in our case, the minority party has always had the upper hand . . . This is nothing but a conspiracy which has been played for long 23 years in this country and is still being played only to exploit the 70 million people of Bengal. It is intended to keep Bengal as the colonial market and we are fighting for justice and fair play and we shall continue fighting until we achieve our goal."

On 3 March the Awami League chief urged the authorities to withdraw the forces from the city and hand over power to the elected representatives of the people. He also issued directives to the people of Bangladesh not to pay any taxes until and unless power was transferred to the people's representatives. However, on 7 March he announced his decision to participate in the National Assembly session provided his 4-point demand was accepted before the session. Addressing a huge public meeting the Sheikh listed his demands as : (1) the withdrawal of Martial Law, (2) sending of troops back to the barracks, (3) inquiry into the killings and (4) transfer of power to the elected representatives

of the people. In a statement issued on the same day he also announced a week-long programme from the next day.

President Yahya Khan's broadcast on 25 March 1971 was followed by army crackdown, and the eruption of civil war in East Bengal, as West wing troops resorted to force to regain control. The people aided by the East Pakistan Rifles and the police resisted the attempt. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was taken into custody and many other Awami League leaders went underground. The proclamation of Independence issued on April 10, which was deemed to have come into effect from 26 March 1971, said : "Whereas free elections were held in Bangladesh from 7 December 1970 to 17 January 1971 to elect representatives for the framing of a constitution, and whereas at these elections the people of Bangladesh elected 167 out of 169 representatives belonging to the Awami League, and whereas General Yahya Khan summoned the elected representatives of the people to meet on 3 March 1971, for the purpose of framing a constitution, and whereas the Assembly so summoned was arbitrarily and illegally postponed for indefinite period, and whereas instead of fulfilling their promise and while still conferring with the representatives of the people of Bangladesh, Pakistani authorities declared an unjust and treacherous war . . . We, the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh, as honour bound by the mandate given to us by the people of Bangladesh, whose will is supreme, duly constituted ourselves into a Constituent Assembly, and having held mutual consultations, and in order to ensure for the people of Bangladesh equality, human dignity and social justice, declare and constitute Bangladesh to be sovereign People's Republic and thereby confirm the declaration of independence already made by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

Tajuddin Ahmad, Prime Minister of Bangladesh in a broadcast on the Swadhin Bangladesh Betar Kendra on 11 April 1971 said : "By your determination and ability to withstand the murderous onslaught of Yahya's gang of professional killers you have shown that a new Bengali nation has been born amidst the ruins of battle-field . . . There can be no doubt about the outcome of the final struggle. Victory is ours . . . We must in this task never forget that this has been a people's war in the truest sense of the word and that had it not been for the courage, patriotism and faith of the common man in the cause of a Free Bangladesh we would never have been able to enjoy the fruits of independence."

When the West Pakistani army launched an all-out offensive in the strongholds of his liberation forces, a Provisional Government, with Syed Nazrul Islam as Acting President and the party General Secretary Tajuddin Ahmad as Prime Minister, successfully guided the war of liberation. After the victory of the combined forces of Indian and Bangladesh and the surrender of West Pakistan army the Government of Pakistan yielded before the pressure of world opinion and released Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman unconditionally. This led to the formation of a new Government in Bangladesh headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the Prime Minister. A new constitution on the basis of parliamentary democracy was to be framed shortly. In his first major policy statement in the Bangladesh Constituent Assembly on the first day of its session on April 10 he declared that his party was determined to give the country 'a mass-oriented constitution' which will guarantee human rights and the rights of the people. The Constituent Assembly by approving another resolution took upon itself the responsibility of framing a constitution on the basis of the four cardinal principles of the State — socialism, democracy, secularism and nationalism.

NOTES

- ¹ Indira Gandhi, *India and Bangladesh*, p. 123.
- ² A. Jamnadas, *The Saga of Bangladesh*, p. 26.
- ³ R. K. Dasgupta, *Revolt in East Bengal*, pp. 19-21.
- ⁴ D. R. Mankekar, *Colonialism in East Bengal*, p. 32.
- ⁵ Government of India, *Bangladesh Documents*, pp. 11-2.
- ⁶ R. K. Dasgupta, *op cit.*, pp. 60-1.
- ⁷ D. R. Mankekar, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

CHETAKAR JHA

Political Ideals of Bangladesh

THE EMERGENCE of Bangladesh is an affirmation of the obvious : it is the outcome of the absurd foundations upon which Pakistan was built. In a retrospective view of the political developments which followed the demand for the creation of Pakistan, the breakdown of the nation has the appearance of a natural logical conclusion. The inherent fallacies in the two-nation theory which were perpetuated by the successive rulers of Pakistan have been exposed ; the politics of the two-nation theory has moved its full circle ; and the birth of the new nation marks a total reversal of that misleading doctrine.

Basically, nationalism is nothing but a sense of identity. In its political manifestation, it is a creed which underlies the cohesion of modern societies, and centres the loyalty of the people round the nation-state, either existing or desired. But social revolution has been a necessary concomitant of this political aspect of nationalism in this century. With the rise of the theory of popular sovereignty, nationalism is not only a movement for the strengthening of national feeling and/or liberation from foreign yoke, but also an ideology founded on a demand for the nature of the entire set-up, namely, the demand that all the measures of the Government should be aimed at promoting the welfare of the entire population, and not of any particular section of it. A sense of identity and right to political self-determination is the essential element of nationalism, the presence of which would determine the cohesion of the peoples and the effectiveness of a political system in any nation. This is the reason why the first problem that every country, in a new

phase, is confronted with has been a quest for identity whose successful solution paves the way for the effective tackling of a number of apparently insurmountable difficulties.

It was this inescapable problem that Pakistan had to face as soon as it was created. Though the demand for the creation of a separate state for Muslims had been made vigorously during all the years after the Lahore Resolution of 1940, the leaders of the Muslim League had only a vague conception of what the new nation would be like, except the emotional aspects of it which they exploited to the maximum to rally support for their demand. In 1930, Sir Mohammad Iqbal had proposed an autonomous Muslim State in the North-West within the Indian Union. The Lahore Resolution of All-India Muslim League, adopted in 1940, expanded the proposal to include the creation of a homeland for all Indian Muslims. But the identity of the desired nation was not envisaged; the resolution was too vague and too much charged with emotion to be a precise statement of the underlying basis on which the demand could be formulated and related to social and economic reality. Keeping in view the remoteness of the transfer of power, it is more likely that the adoption of the Pakistan Resolution was more an attempt to increase the bargaining power of the Muslim League than a call for a pragmatic action to attain any definite end.

However, the demand gathered enough support and Pakistan became a reality. Making the Hindus the scapegoat of their movement, it was the Muslim unity in India that the Muslim League always invoked. Even Jinnah was aware of the fact that it was only as a reflection of the Muslim anxiety in an undivided India that the Muslim consciousness could be sustained. But once Pakistan was created, the problem of the quest for identity asserted itself: the absence of the anxiety itself posed a problem. It was then that the leaders of Pakistan started looking for objectives capable of sustaining the communal consciousness which they had laboured hard to build up. Pakistan had been created: the ideal was still missing.

Jinnah had first intended to create a modern state in Pakistan which would be non-religious and whose nationalism would provide its peoples with a sense of identity there. In his Inaugural Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, he laid utmost emphasis on secularism and felt that "in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as the citizens of the State." His secular dream, however, did not last long, and the definition of identity which he provided during his Dacca visit of 1948 was a negation of the secular principles which he himself, among all the Muslim leaders, had enunciated. "What is the use of saying 'we are Bengalis, or Sindhis, or Pathans, or

Punjabis?', he had asked, and in an emphatic tone declared: 'No, we are Muslims.'" This Islamic basis of Pakistani nationhood was formally written down when the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan adopted an Objectives Resolution in March 1949. Thus, religion was again sought to be used as an instrument for providing the basis of the political system. Since the call for Muslim unity had been effective in the creation of Pakistan, it was presumed that it would be a good enough tool to be utilized every now and then to solve political and other problems. The subsequent events clearly showed how naïve this presumption was. It only betrayed an anti-Indian and a negative attitude as distinguished from a positive one.

The emotional charge of the appeal to religion, and its communal overtones, had, however, served their purpose, but they could not be made to face the concrete social and economic problems. Soon the emotional charge lost its appeal and the people of East Pakistan, who had been swayed by the wave of communalism during the demand of the partition of the subcontinent, became aware of the designed discrimination against them in the new State. They realized the deceitful nature of the communal appeal. For, communalism and exploitation were as prevalent in Pakistan as they had been imagined to be prevalent in undivided India. Instead of Hindu-Muslim conflict, there was now the conflict between the eastern and the western wings. The promised land of fulfilment turned out to be a system of economic strangulation. The bulk of the public investment had been in West Pakistan, though the majority of the population lay in the eastern wing. In defence, the West's share was 80% and the East's 20%, while for civilian purposes the percentage was 60 for the West and 40 for the East. Then, there was a systematic discrimination in agricultural, industrial and power development, in educational facilities, as also in political and civil rights and liberties.

The realization of this religious colonialism by the people of East Pakistan culminated in a spirited protest. Constituting fifty-five per cent of the population, their trump card was naturally democracy. Their demand was for political self-determination. On the other hand, the Punjabis who controlled power in West Pakistan, built up a military-bureaucratic complex and resorted to authoritarianism. The conflict was between democracy, deriving its force from the autonomous nationalism of the East Pakistanis, and authoritarianism, sustaining itself by anti-Indian and religious appeals.

The opposition to authoritarianism, if it were to be meaningful — as indeed, it proved to be — demanded two things from the Bengalis: an opposition to anti-Indian posture of the Government, and increasing attention and comprehension of the importance to local culture and language rather than Islam. For, these were the two layers of identity

that the Pakistani leaders had provided, and their co-rejection was essential for making the social and economic foundation of the movement real and effective. Their opposition to anti-Indian policies was necessary to focus the attention on the more closely relevant social problems; their emphasis on secularism was necessary in order to deny any religious basis for exploitation; and democracy was the only tool or means of realizing their objectives.

With the independence of Bangladesh, the relevance of both democracy and secularism only increases. These ideological tools have secured the release of the Bengalis from the complete political subjugation of the last twenty-five years, and it is only by the adoption of policies based on these that the problems of the new nation are to be solved. The greatest problem which Bangladesh faces today is that of poverty. First, the discrimination by the West Pakistan Government and later, the butchery of the people, have completely shattered the economic foundation of the country. The problem is of an alarming proportion. To solve this problem, the primary requirements are co-operation of the people and foreign aid. Democracy alone can provide the political basis which would ensure the commitment of every individual to the achievement of the goals. By a consciousness of the objectives of the nation and of their own rights, the people would develop a high degree of emotional urge in the development plans of the Government and will come forward for active participation to a larger extent. This would go a long way in helping the efforts of the Government in solving the challenging tasks. And secularism is equally essential for the development of the nation. It would help the nation to assimilate the different sections of the people, regardless of religion, and place them in the mainstream of national life. This will also help them in procuring aid from countries, notwithstanding religious differences. Refusing to confine herself to Islamic brotherhood, and upholding the ideals of secularism and democracy, Bangladesh, with the help of other nations, can meet the challenges more effectively than it would otherwise do.

SYAMAL CHAKRABARTY

*The Emergence of a Nation :
From Pak Patriotism to Bengali Nationalism*

ONE YEAR AGO the people of Bangladesh were engaged in a grim fight against the murderous hordes of Yahya Khan. A large number of publicists and diplomats, politicians and ordinary folk expressed their fear that this 'secessionist' struggle was without any political justice in its favour. Amongst such people were deeply involved propagandists with their own particular axes to grind, but by far the largest section among them were genuinely confused men who did not know the facts as they were. It was then a matter of urgency to explain to the world the nature of Bengali Nationalism and the justice of the demand for independent statehood by Bengalis.

Now after the establishment of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and after the full diplomatic recognition has been given by more than fifty States of the world including the U.S.A., there is obviously no longer that urgency. Nevertheless an analysis of the national liberationist contents of the struggle is a matter of immense importance. Academically, its chief value lies in the fact that the whole incident permits the theory to be retested in the light of actual experience. From the practical point of view, such analysis is of importance on the following three counts : (a) it is expected to convince the remaining doubting Thomases and is likely to win friends for Bangladesh ; (b) it is likely to clarify and redefine scientifically the relationship of the people of Bangladesh with the people of West Bengal by blowing away some of the mist of romantic

emotionalism that still exists ; and (c) it offers the possibility of drawing valid lessons for national liberation struggles elsewhere in the world.

THE BEGINNING — PAKISTANI PATRIOTISM

There can be no dispute about the fact that in 1947, the people of East Bengal — now Bangladesh — welcomed with outstretched hands the new State of Pakistan. However, as Gunnar Myrdal says, "... few modern states started their independent existence on such a tenuous basis and under such severe initial difficulties as Pakistan. Not only was the new country split into two wings, separated by over a thousand miles of Indian territory ; many vital arteries were severed in the process."¹ Yet this Pakistan represented the achievement of the ideal to the Bengali Muslims, because to them 'Freedom' meant not merely liberation from British rule, but also escape from Hindu domination. The terrible riots that preceded and followed partition, the referendum in Sylhet, and the general enthusiasm of the man-in-the street, all offer proof enough for the Pakistani patriotism of the Muslim masses in East Bengal. The fact that there was nothing common between the peoples of the two wings of Pakistan but their common religion and common hatred of Hindu domination was no deterrent to their common faith in the glorious mission of Pakistan. To them Pakistan was their national state and independence was the panacea for all ills.

There was some logic behind this optimism. The exploitation by Hindu landlords and money-lenders in East Bengal was real and formation of Pakistan implied freedom from this exploitation. What is more, East Bengal accounted for more than half of the population of Pakistan and had a homogeneous population, more than 98% of whom spoke Bengali, whereas in West Pakistan, there were four distinct national groups, of whom the Punjabis were about 29% of the total population of Pakistan, the Sindhis a little above 5%, the Pushtu-speaking Pathans nearly 4% and the Baluchis about 2%. It is to be noticed that Urdu was brought by the refugees from India and was spoken by about 4% of the total population. In the circumstances the Bengalis felt that their future in the new state was secure.

Disillusionment came slowly, but continued to grow in volume during the period of 24 years, till the Bengalis expressed themselves finally and irrevocably for complete separation from Pakistan and for independent statehood.

COUNTING WITHOUT THE HOST

But the seeds of dissolution of Pakistan were there in the state from the very beginning. They were there not in the multi-lingual

multi-national character of the state, neither in the geographical separation of the two wings. They remained in the very character of the rule imposed on the people of Pakistan.

Further, the following facts are worth serious consideration :

(1) The Muslim League which inherited power after independence never popularized or got itself committed to a social, economic or political philosophy of reform or development.

(2) The class background of the leadership that came to power on the achievement of statehood has been delineated by Gunnar Myrdal in the following manner : "They were mainly professional politicians, related to the Muslim hereditary landlords of the northern part of imperial India, with only a sprinkling of the type of industrialists and commercial people who were so important among supporters of the Indian Congress. Partition had induced or compelled many of these living in the northwestern part of what was going to be India to take refuge in West Pakistan. However, they generally managed to bring much of their wealth with them and quickly found opportunities for its aggrandizement. In Sind, West Punjab, and the border areas to the north and west there was already a class of strongly retrenched absentee landlords. Until the recent land reform about half the area of West Pakistan consisted of holdings of more than 500 acres. In the Punjab nearly 60% of the land belonged to big zamindars, while in Sind, that citadel of exploitative feudalism, a few hundred landlords owned practically all the arable land. In East Pakistan, by contrast, a large number of the zamindars had been Hindus. With partition they generally fled to India and the tenants took over the land. . . . Higher civil servants and army officers, like the League leaders, were also linked by birth or marriage to the Muslim landowners of northern British India."²

(3) Jinnah, the architect of Pakistan, enjoyed immense prestige. But as the first Governor-General and President of the Constituent Assembly he ran the affairs of the state in a thoroughly authoritarian manner. Moreover, his authoritarianism was utterly conservative in character. His political successors had none of his prestige, but inherited fully his reactionary outlook.

(4) To quote Gunnar Myrdal again, "The administration of the central government was dominated by West Pakistan officials, who in the early years of independence were not noticeably sympathetic to the development problems and needs of the East. And, since there had been virtually no East Bengali Moslems in the entire Indian Civil Service in British times, after partition the senior administrative positions in East Pakistan had to be staffed by Moslems from other areas, especially Punjab and the former United Provinces. . . . The non-Bengali officials even

expected the Bengalis, who cherished their own language, to learn Urdu or English, and generally sneered at Bengali culture. The senior officers of the armed forces, which absorbed about two-thirds of the central government's revenue, also came predominantly from West Pakistan, . . . in East Pakistan, especially during the period of governor's rule in 1954, they were looked upon almost as an occupation force."³

(5) The professional politicians, out to make a fast fortune by utilizing the state machinery, very soon stood exposed before the common people with their insincerity, inefficiency and corruption. With the Punjabi, ex-Audit and Accounts Officer, Ghulam Mohammad, as the Governor-General and another Punjabi ex-civilian Choudhury Mohammad Ali as his Finance Minister, the passing of power into the hands of the bureaucracy was complete.

(6) It was under the pilotage of Ghulam Mohammad that Pakistan was tied to the military chariot wheels of U.S. militarism. In November 1953 Ghulam Mohammad went to the U.S.A. ostensibly for treatment. He, however, met President Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, Dulles, on 12 November. These negotiations resulted in a number of treaties being signed within a short while. The pact with Turkey was signed on 2 April 1954. It was followed in May 1954 by the U.S.-Pak Pact. The South East Asia Mutual Security Pact came on 8 September 1954. 1955 saw the birth of the Baghdad Pact. Since then Pakistan remained a consistent purveyor of American foreign policy.

(7) Internally these pacts immensely boosted up the role of the armed forces in the affairs of the state. Thus General Iskander Mirza was first the Defence Minister, shortly to become the President and then Dictator of Pakistan, to be booted out within three weeks by the then Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, General Ayub Khan.

(8) The second consequence followed from the inflow of huge American economic and military aid. Edward S. Mason, Robert Dofrman and Stephen A. Marglin in their famous report 'Conflict in East Pakistan: Background and Prospects' have made the following estimate: "Since 1951 Pakistan has been a major recipient of U.S. economic aid, amounting to approximately \$3 billion by 1969. Except for food aid donated under Public Law 480, the bulk of this assistance has been used to support industrialization in West Pakistan, with only a handful of projects undertaken in East Pakistan.

"The quantum of U.S. military aid to Pakistan is a classified figure, but two estimates put it between \$1.5 to 2 billion for the period between 1954 and 1965."⁴

The pumping in of all this aid very soon gave rise to the monopoly houses of twenty-two families, comprising a handful of old landlords,



industrialists and financiers, now joined in by some families of civil and military officials.

Such was the make-up of Pakistan, — a military-bureaucratic state of landlords and monopolists, out to exploit and oppress the entire populace. This could never solve the problem of nationalities, integrate the entire people into a nation and move forward to give effect to the legitimate aspirations of the masses.

EXPLOITATION AND DISCRIMINATION

In all the colonial countries, the desire for political freedom has been closely linked up with the urge for freedom from economic exploitation and opening up the path of developmental opportunities. But independence did not mean serving quit notice to the British imperial interests so far as Pakistan was concerned. British commercial, financial and industrial interests were protected as before. The only novelty in the situation was that very soon Pakistan opened her gates to American financial penetration.

Pakistan was a country overwhelmingly of peasants. Yet land reform was not undertaken. Gankovsky and L. R. Gordon-Polouskaya write : "Only the first stage of the reform—purchase of the estates of the upper stratum of landholders — was carried through in East Pakistan. The institution of rent-collecting intermediaries survived, and the land was not re-distributed. Furthermore, it was mostly the estates of Hindu landlords who had moved to India that were purchased. By mid-1956 the government bought 432 estates. The sub-infeudation system was abolished in just two tahsils of the Bakarganj district and five tahsils of Khulna, where the government purchased the land of intermediaries and turned over what amounted to three per cent of East Pakistan cultivated arable to occupancy tenants under the re-allotment scheme."⁵

As a background to this, let us remember what the same authors have to say : "80% of the land in East Pakistan was concentrated in the hands of the landlord and the middlemen who collected the rent. A third of the rural population were share-croppers most of whom had no legal title to the plot they cultivated. Half the peasants of East Pakistan tilled tiny allotments, consisting of 0.8 hectares each."⁶

Hardly any serious attempt was made for mechanization and improvement of agriculture. For all their difficulties, the government of the day continued pointing its finger at the so-called Indian conspiracy. But gradually it was revealed that agricultural backwardness and fall in agricultural production were due chiefly to floods and droughts, complete negligence of irrigation and flood-control measures, the old tenancy system, bureaucratic inefficiency, widespread corruption and governmental neglect and callousness. In 1951, a terrible famine raged over the three

districts of Khulna, Bakarganj and Noakhali. Nearly 1.2 million people, inhabiting an area of 90 square miles, in the Sundarbans region, suffered abominably and about 20 thousand people died over a period of 3 years. The root cause of this suffering was the enforced stoppage of normal trade of the people of this area with the neighbouring areas of West Bengal.

During the two decades of '50s and '60s big irrigation projects were undertaken in West Pakistan with no parallel measures in East Bengal.

East Bengal is essentially a riverine country. During the first eleven years since independence, she had no dockyard of her own and the three lakhs of boats were prevented from coming to Calcutta for repair or renovation.

Jute is the chief cash crop of East Bengal and its natural market was West Bengal. With the sundering of the natural ties, the peasantry suffered. The boom following the Korean War brought temporary prosperity chiefly to the merchants. With the oncoming of the slump, merchants survived by transferring the burdens to the peasantry.

The government made it legally mandatory that all foreign merchandise must first reach West Pakistan and then they were to be re-exported to East Bengal. As a consequence the Bengali purchaser had to make an additional payment in the form of shipping charges and middlemen's profits to West Pakistani businessmen.

The government of East Bengal was given a share of income-tax and excise duties on tea, tobacco and betel-nuts. But the rule was that if the income-tax was raised in the central government's territory, the provincial government could claim no share of it. In practice it was seen that the head offices of most of the business-houses working in East Bengal were situated in Karachi and that fact deprived East Bengal of her share of the income tax assessed on such firms. East Bengal had further cause of dissatisfaction in the fact that while huge amount went to the coffers of the central government in the shape of excise duties, the provincial government worked with deficit budgets from year to year and hardly any developmental programme could be undertaken in East Bengal till the end of the first decade of independence.

During the period 1947 to 1956, West Pakistan was the recipient of Rs. 10,000 m. and East Bengal Rs. 1,260 m. only from the central revenues. Capital investment by the central government in West Pakistan was to the extent of Rs. 2,100 m. and in East Bengal Rs. 620 m. only. The allocation of foreign aid was of Rs. 740 m. for West Pakistan and Rs. 150 m. for East Bengal.

Mason, Dorfman and Marglin in their pamphlet point out, "With 60% of the population, East Pakistan's share of central government development expenditure has been as low as 20% during 1950/51—1954/55, attaining a peak of 36% during the Third Five Year Plan

period 1965/66—1969/70. East Pakistan has received an even smaller share of private investment, less than 25%.”

They further state : “ . . . it is clear that foreign exchange has been allocated to the detriment of East Pakistan. Over the last two decades East Pakistan's share of total Pakistan export earnings has varied between 50% and 70%, while its share of imports has been in the range of 25% to 30%.

“ . . . The West's preponderant share of imports and investments might have provided inexpensive necessities for all of Pakistan's people. In fact it has allowed the development of inefficient industries which, ironically, have prospered largely because of tariffs and quotas that have made East Pakistan a captive market. 40% of all exports of West Pakistan are sold to East Pakistan ; in 1968-69 the West sold 50% more to the East than it bought from the East.

“An analysis of foreign trade data reveals that a net transfer of resources has taken place from East to West Pakistan. According to the official report referred to above, East Pakistan has transferred approximately \$2.6 billion to West Pakistan over the period of 1948-49 to 1968-69.”

Even the Fourth Five year Plan Report of the Government of Pakistan admits that East Pakistan got 31% of total public sector and private sector of plan allocations during the Second Five Year Plan period and 36% of the same in the Third Five Year Plan.

To sum up, during the 24 years since independence and partition land reforms were not undertaken ; agricultural production had received no significant aid of modern science and technology ; the suffering of the Bengali population due to natural calamities had been callously neglected ; the meagre industrial development had been at the behest of the West Pak financiers ; commercial activities had been deliberately tilted to favour West Pakistan monopolists ; employment opportunities in the tertiary sector had been mostly kept barred from the Bengali intellectuals. Economic exploitation and loot on such a scale can hardly find any parallel in modern times. All classes of the population, the agricultural labourers, the peasantry in general, the rising middle classes, the urban proletariat, the industrial and commercial interests, — all felt the pressure of the iron heel of West Pakistani rule. There was a complete alienation, in actual economic terms, of the entire population from the government. What is more, the people felt that the Hindu landlords and money-lenders had left ; there was no competition from Hindu doctors or lawyers, teachers or employees of any significance. The cause of all this suffering stood naked before the eyes of the Bengali population. It was the West Pakistan ruling classes.

CULTURAL AND POLITICAL OPPRESSION

The disillusionment with the central authorities started early. It was in March 1948, only a few months after the formation of Pakistan, that Jinnah declared before the convocation of the Dacca University that Urdu would be the only state language of Pakistan. There was instantaneous and spontaneous opposition from a section of the students. The obdurate attitude of the central government very soon gave birth to a widespread movement for recognition of Bengali as an alternative state language. The firing on a student demonstration in April 1951 and the consequent killing of several young students led not only to a discontent and agitation all over the state, it gave the movement a national character. It became a legend and a myth. Though the demand was ultimately conceded, the ruling authorities took two other offensives. First, an attempt was made to introduce Urdu script for Bengali. Secondly, as the first attempt fizzled out, there was a further attempt to Urduize Bengali itself, by random use of Arabic and Persian terms. Both these attempts were defeated. But meanwhile a feeling amongst the people grew that the West Pakistan authorities wanted to destroy their distinctive culture and independent identity.

There was never any attempt to remove this feeling. In the name of deHinduizing Bengali culture, a ban was imposed on singing poet Tagore's songs — which policy boomeranged, made poet Tagore's songs most popular in East Bengal and crowned him, quite justly, as the national poet of East Bengal.

In the field of education it would be seen that there has been a relatively large advance in West Pakistan as compared to East Bengal.

ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS

	East Pakistan				West Pakistan			
	1947/48-1966/67				1947/48-1966/67			
In Classes I-IV	27.6	lakhs	46.0	lakhs	7.7	lakhs	33.8	lakhs
" " VI-VIII	1.8	"	6.43	"	2.21	"	7.62	"
" " IX-X	0.76	"	2.75	"	0.58	"	2.73	"
" Arts & Science Colleges	18.6		139.6		13.5		149.6	
		thousands		thousands		thousands		thousands

Several points emerge from the data given above. First, the expansion of educational facilities has not kept pace with the wishes of the people. Secondly, there has been a birth of new intelligentsia who do not look upon the Hindus as their exploiters; however, the West Pakistani rulers appeared with the mark of Cain instead.

Politically, it has to be noted that the Lahore resolution of the Muslim League, passed on 23 March 1940, stated, "... the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign . . ." Therefore, with the formation of the State of Pakistan, there was general expectation that the provinces would enjoy a large measure of autonomy. This was belied and the State of Pakistan was made a centralized state.

The provincial legislature brought into being through the elections held in 1954 was soon dissolved to yield place to bureaucratic rule. From 1958 the entire State passed under the control of a military dictatorship. The basic democracy introduced by Field Marshal Ayub Khan was soon seen to be a political hoax — a fraud. The democratic path having been abandoned, its advantage was lost. Alienation of the people from the Government was complete.

STRUGGLES OF RESISTANCE

The history of 24 years of Pakistani rule in East Bengal is the history of struggles of the people, both sectional and partial, political and national.

The history of the language movement is too well known to need repetition.

Non-communal political parties came into being and went on playing important roles in the political areas in the mid-fifties. In the general elections of 1954 the United Front completely routed the Muslim League. The conspiracies of the Pakistani rulers could not save it and the weakness of the politicians led to the supersession of the ministry and legislature. But the slogan of provincial autonomy had been a powerful lever in the elections and remained strongly branded one in the memory of the people.

In 1949, the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League was formed in opposition to the Muslim League. The term 'Muslim' was dropped from the name in 1955. In 1951, Youth League was born with non-communal revolutionary slogans. In January 1953, Pakistan Ganantri Dal came into being. In September 1953, Krishak-Sramik Party was organized under the leadership of late Fazl-ul-Huq. The Communist Party of East Pakistan had been there from the very beginning, though it was put under a ban since 1954. The National Awami Party came into existence in February 1957.

In one word, during the first decade of independence the old political digests were changing, yielding place to a new rational and scientific political attitude.

There were innumerable partial struggles all this while, many of which remain unrecorded in history. 1948 saw the first police strike. In the share-cropper's movement in Jessore in 1948, police repression almost turned the Narail subdivision into a veritable battlefield. The peasant movement in Sylhet against the feudal 'Nankar' system had to face widespread police repression. The peasant movement in the Hajang areas of Mymensingh against the Tanka system had to face unbelievable repressions. The Santal rebellion in Nachole and the barbaric repression of same had become a historical celebrity.

1962 saw a widespread national movement against military dictatorship. Many of the political leaders were put behind prison bars. In 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman led a countrywide political movement on the basis of his Six-point programme. He was promptly imprisoned.

In order to kill the popularity of Sheikh Mujib, the military dictatorship soon started the notorious Agartala Conspiracy Case. But the attempt boomeranged and made Mujib the national hero. In January 1969, a tremendous political struggle broke out all over East Bengal. Ayub Khan had to come down. Mujib was made free. And the demand for democratic reforms gained momentum.

Ayub left soon; but the military dictatorship continued under General Yahya Khan, the perfidious nature of whose activities are too recent and too well known to need any enumeration here.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE NATION

The general elections of 1970 were fought by Awami League with the political demand of a weak centre and strong provincial autonomy. His demands were practically the demands of 1954 United Front reformulated. Mujibur Rahman and Awami League did not work for secession. The treachery of the military dictatorship and the civil war imposed by Yahya regime ultimately led to the demand for complete independence of Bangladesh.

The people of East Bengal was undoubtedly a nationality, with a common language, a common pattern of economic activity, and a common way of living. But there are any number of multi-national states. Nationalities everywhere do not demand independence, neither are they able to form sovereign states.

In political theory today we do not believe in the old formula: a people is a nation when it feels to be a nation. It is not merely a subjective phenomenon. There must be solid socio-economic and political reasons behind such feeling. The role of history, in particular, is recognized by Marxist and non-Marxist theoreticians.⁹

The people of East Bengal were transformed into a nation through the social, economic, cultural and political oppression of West Pakistani



reactionary landlords and 22 families of monopolists, as ultimately expressed through the military dictatorial rule. The struggles against this oppression and exploitation have welded East Bengalis into a nation.

Language alone does not make a nation. Any talk of unity between East and West Bengal now is pure moonshine and its unscientific and reactionary character has to be shown up. Fraternal though the relationship of the peoples on both sides of the border be, it is basically international. This fact has to be fully comprehended with all its implications to strengthen the bonds of a brotherhood.

India as a whole has played a significant role in the liberation of Bangladesh. It was a case of international co-operation in the interests of both the peoples, for peace and mutual security in the Indian sub-continent and mutual co-operation for development.

All problems of national integration of Bangladesh have not yet been solved, but a very solid basis of secularism has been laid. With the establishment of a democratic constitution and the guaranteeing of the rights of all minorities, with the radical land reforms being put into operation and a programme of economic development coming into force, the process of integration will move apace. Economic development and social justice are two basic planks of integration. Where an entire people have taken part in the movement of national liberation, the legitimate social and economic demands of each section have to be met.

From the point of view of political theory, the role of armed guerilla struggle and international military aid needs a close study. The struggle of the people of Bangladesh has indubitably proved that political power as such does not come through the gun-barrel. The military dictatorship had plenty of guns. Liberation came as a result of complete political unity of the people, backed by armed resistance. However, it may be hoped that the future will bring out a better understanding of the role of the guerillas and the Indian armed forces in this struggle of liberation.

NOTES

¹ Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama*, Penguin Books, London, 1968, Vol. I, p. 305.

² *ibid.*, p. 309.

³ *ibid.*, p. 317.

⁴ *Mainstream*, New Delhi, May 15, 1971, p. 15.

⁵ Gankovsky and Polouskaya, *A History of Pakistan*, Nauka Publishing House, Moscow, pp. 249-50.

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 103-4.

⁷ *Mainstream*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 16.



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* The following two definitions may be noted :

- (i) "A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up, manifested in a community of culture."

(J. Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, Burmon Publishing House, Calcutta, p. 6)

- (ii) "Nationality is the sense of community which, under the historical conditions of a particular social epoch, has possessed or still seeks expression through the unity of a state."

(R. M. MacIver, *The Modern State*, Oxford University Press, London, p. 124).

I. N. TEWARY

Structure of the Political Ideas of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

POLITICAL IDEAS of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman appear to combine the influence of socialistic objectives, Islamic conviction, parliamentary method and technique of civil disobedience. Before an attempt is made to understand the multidimensional aspects of his political ideas, a few limitations should be made known in this respect. In the first place, all the ideas of the leader of Bangladesh are not available because of the crisis. Secondly, most of his writings, public speeches, letters and other material are available in Bangla language with which the present author is not conversant.

With these limitations here is an attempt to present the elements of his political ideas, with the help of a model that emerges out of classification of the ideas of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The classification itself is based on evolutionary, theoretical, structural, organizational, constitutional implications and comparative considerations. The graphic presentation of the political ideas of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is intended to combine on the one hand understanding of the multidimensional components of his ideas and opportunity for testing them in the field situation on the other.

The ideas are based on his speeches in the Constituent and National Assemblies of Pakistan, the six aspects of the principle of autonomy as explained in his booklet *Our Right to Live*, the defence statement in the Agartala Conspiracy Case, the speech of the Round Table

Conference of Rawalpindi in 1969, the manifesto of the Awami League, the 35-point explanation of the programmes, phasing and strategy of the civil disobedience movement of March 1971, speeches at Dacca, the text of the Draft Proclamation of March 1971 for the establishment of a United States of Pakistan. It is presented to the Seminar with the hope that the participants may help in clarifying the various inner dimensions of the political ideas of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The table below shows the evolutionary, structural, actional and implicational aspects of his ideas.

A. EVOLUTIONARY

I. CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL IDEAS

Year	Items
1955	1. Call it Bengal 2. Give us Democracy 3. The Need for Autonomy 4. The unit for West Pakistan
1956	1. Distortion of Islam 2. Joint Electorate
1966	1. 6-Point Formula
1969	1. Defence Statement in the Agartala Conspiracy Case 2. The Solution of Ills
1970	1. Transfer of Power to the People
1971	1. The Struggle must continue 2. Nobody can stop us 3. Stop all wheels from moving 4. 35-Point Directives 5. Draft Proclamation

II. SOLUTION OF VARIOUS POINTS — PROGRAMME

21-Point Programme March 1954	6-Point Programme March 1966	11-Point Programme February 1969
1. Make Bangla one of the State Languages of Pakistan.	1. Establish a Federation with Parliamentary form of Government.	1. Develop Education.
2. Abolish land receiving interest on land and distribute the surplus lands among the landless and reduce land tax.	2. Give all Powers to the States except Defence and Foreign Affairs.	2. Establish Parliamentary Democracy on the basis of adult suffrage.
3. Nationalize Jute Trade.		3. Federalize only Defence and Foreign Affairs.
4. Introduce Co-operative Farming.		4. Grant Autonomy to States.
5. Industrialize East Pakistan.		5. Nationalize Monetary System.
6. Rehabilitate Refugees.	3. Create separate convertible Currency with separate financial managements for the two wings.	6. Reduce taxes and revenue on Peasants.
7. Improve and Develop Irrigation System.		7. Give fair wages to workers.
8. Guarantee Economic and Social Rights of Labourers.	4. Grant Taxing Rights to the States.	8. Take flood control measures.
9. Introduce Free and Compulsory Primary Education.		9. Withdraw all Emergency Laws.
10. Reorient entire Secondary Education.	5. Create separate accounts for the two Wings.	10. Quit SEATO, CENTO and Pak-US Military Pacts.
11. Repeal all reactionary laws regarding the University.		
12. Establish an austere Administration : Minister to get only Rs. 100.00.		

II. SOLUTION OF VARIOUS POINTS — PROGRAMMES

21-Point Programme March 1954	6-Point Programme March 1966	11-Point Programme February 1969
13. Eradicate Corruption.		
14. Release all the Security Prisoners.		
15. Separate Executive from Judiciary.		
16. Establish a Research Institute.		
17. Erect Monuments for Martyrs.		
18. Declare 21st February as Shaheed Day.		
19. Implement Lahore Resolution and give autonomy to States.	6. Create separate Militia for East 11. Release all detenus and political prisoners, Pakistan.	
20. Hold free and fair Election.		
21. Hold later bye-elections if need be.		

III. CONTEMPORARY ACTIVISTS AND POLITICAL IDEAS

School of Thinking	Personalities	Aspects of Ideas
1. Islamic	1. Islamic	Islamic Equality Islamic Justice Islamic Fraternity
	1. Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah 2. Fazl-ul-Huq 3. H. S. Suhrawardy	1. Dynamic Leadership 2. Cultural Nationalism 3. United and Sovereign Bengal
	1. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao	1. "Vanguard of the People" 2. "People's Democracy" 3. "People's Power" 4. "Exploitation Must End"
2. Communist	2. Central European—Dubcek	1. "Liquidate the enemies by denying food and drink to them"
	3. Chinese type	1. "Fight the enemy whenever you can catch hold of him" 2. "Hit back the enemies squarely"
	4. Central and Latin American Revolutionaries	1. "The struggle must continue" 2. "We have learnt the art of dying"
3. Militant Nationalist	1. Subhash Chandra Bose	1. "I shall break down but never bow down" 2. "If the enemies use their guns, we shall hit them back"

III. CONTEMPORARY ACTIVISTS AND POLITICAL IDEAS

School of Thinking	Personalities	Aspects of Ideas
4. Socialist	1. Jayaprakash Narayan	1. "Transfer of Power to the People" 2. "Need for a Social Revolution" 3. "End of Exploitation" 4. "Social Order in a Free Society"
	2. Ram Manohar Lohia	1. "Mass-action for the realization of democratic goals"
	3. Jawaharlal Nehru	1. "Full Blooded Democracy" 2. "Real Living Democracy" 3. "Non-alignment" 4. "Mixed Economy" 5. "Peaceful World"
5. Humanist	1. Rabindra Nath Tagore and M. N. Roy	1. Concept of "Sonar Bangla" 2. Enlightened Patriotism 3. "Harmony between Rural and Urban Life"
6. Radical Humanist	1. M. N. Roy	1. Humane Socialism
7. Non-violent	1. Gandhiji	1. "Resist the corrupt with all might" 2. "Rural Reconstruction" 3. "Ultimate Power is People's Power"



B. THEORETICAL

I. BROAD FORMS OF THEMES

S. No.	Broad Forms	I t e m s
1.	Theoretical.	1. State Power. 2. Political Values. 3. Rights and Duties. 4. Federal Polity. 5. Democracy. 6. New Meaning of Islam. 7. Joint Electorate.
2.	Structural.	1. Federal Structure. 2. Division of Power. 3. Currency Structure. 4. Taxational System. 5. Financial Management. 6. Military Autonomy.
3.	Organizational.	1. Organization of the Awami League. 2. Preparation for Elective Politics. 3. Organization of various other voluntary cadres.
	(a) Political	
	(b) Programmatic	1. Elective Power. 2. Education. 3. Industry. 4. Co-operatives. 5. Flood Control.
4.	Constitutional.	1. Meaning of 'State'. 2. Presidential Power. 3. Legislative Power. 4. Judicial System. 5. Financial System. 6. Power of Bangladesh Government.
5.	Actional.	1. No-tax campaign as part of Civil Disobedience Movement. 2. Functions of Bank. 3. Functions of Organs of Government. 4. Transport System. 5. Communication System. 6. Developmental and Relief. 7. Voluntary Organization.

II. POINT NO. 1 : FEDERAL STRUCTURE

Existing Polity	Rationale of Point No. 1
1. Anti-Lahore Resolution.	1. Federal Pakistan.
2. Anti-Freedom people.	2. Basis of Federation in Lahore Resolution.
3. Job-hunters.	3. Parliamentary Form of Government.
4. Opportunist.	4. Government responsible to Legislature.
5. Pseudo-Federalist.	5. Supremacy of Legislature.
6. Abberationist.	6. Directly Elected Legislature.
7. Anti-integrationist.	7. Election the basis of adult suffrage.
8. Anti-stability people.	
9. Exploiters.	
10. Vested Interest.	
11. Conspirators.	

III. POINT NO. 2 : DIVISION OF POWER

Division of Power	Rationale of Point No. 2
Only Defence and Foreign affairs to the Federal Government.	1. Respectability.
	2. Strength.
	3. Loyalty.
Or	4. Affection.
Single currency convertible for the two units.	5. Peace.
	6. Allegiance.
	7. Efficiency.
	8. Profitability.
	9. Strength of the Units.
	10. Base, not apex, to be stronger.
	11. Principle of Governance.
	12. Decentralization.
	13. Non-Centralization.
	14. Doctrine of Municipal Administration.
	15. Maxim of unity in diversity.
	16. Non-overcentralization.
	17. Non-apex approach of distribution.
	18. Development.
	19. Division of subjects.
	20. Principle of Joint Management.
	21. Principle of Local Self-Government.
	22. Communication.
	23. Principle of Organization of Territorial Units.
	24. Principle of Satisfaction of having a New Nomenclature : "States", not "Provinces".
	25. Principle of Experience of other countries.
	26. Principle of Cabinet Plan.
	27. Principle of functioning of the Congress Party of India.
	28. Principle of functioning of the Muslim League.
	29. Consideration of 21-point Programme.
	30. Indivisibility of Interest.
	31. Pragmatic consideration.
	32. Historical consideration.



IV. POINT NO. 3 : CURRENCY STRUCTURE

Currency Structure	Rationale
(a) Two separate but convertible currencies.	1. Safeguard against economic ruination. 2. Procedures of Expenditure. 3. Mobility of Capital.
(b) One currency but separate banking, fiscal and monetary policy.	4. For maintaining Indivisibility of Economy. 5. To Correct Monetary Centralism. 6. To Reduce Financial Centralism. 7. To remove generous effects of accumulative money. 8. To moderate advantages from trade and commerce. 9. To stop one-way traffic of finance. 10. Geographical factor. 11. Principle of Development. 12. Question of Employment. 13. Economic Autonomy. 14. Avoiding Absence of Mobility. 15. Avoiding Absence of Mobility of Labour. 16. To neutralize the concentration of advantages of Government offices in the West. 17. To neutralize the advantage of concentration of diplomatic offices in the West. 18. To neutralize the expenditure by the Army personnel in the Western Wing. 19. To neutralize offices of flight of capital. 20. To manage capital formation in the East. 21. To manage rapid industrialization of the East.

VII. POINT NO. 6 : MILITARY STRUCTURE

Military Autonomy	Rationale
Para-Military Forces for East Pakistan.	1. Historical, as Eastern Rifles were there before Independence. 2. Political obligation to defend a territory. 3. Moral duty to safeguard integrity. 4. People must exercise military initiative. 5. It is a just demand. 6. Question of obeying conscience. 7. Military is an organic part of the polity. 8. Communication and Transport. 9. Experiences of 17-day war of 1965. 10. Necessity of a strong defence policy. 11. Vindication of principle of self-sufficiency in defence.



ACTIONAL

1. GENERAL

1 Demands	2 Action Programme
1. Withdrawal of Military Personnel. 2. Cessation of firing on Civilians. 3. Cessation of military build-up. 4. Non-interference by military authorities. 5. Withdrawal of Martial Law. 6. Maintenance of law and order by Bengal EPR and Awami League workers. 7. Transfer of power to the people's representatives.	1. Strike in Government Offices. 2. Police to maintain Law and Order. 3. People's work by officials without attending offices. 4. Non-military function of Ports. 5. Post and Telegraph to function for Bangladesh and some for foreign countries. 6. Partial functioning of Teleprinter for sending messages. 7. Radio and Television to report only popular 8. Input distribution on top priority. 9. Tax collection by Bangladesh Government. 10. Indirect taxes by Bengali Banks. 11. No collection of Income-tax. 12. Industry to function but schools closed. 13. Black flag to be hoisted.

3 Organization	4 Method	5 Phasing
1. Awami League. 2. MNA. 3. MPA. 4. Sangram Parishad. 5. Subordinate administration to Awami League. 6. Workers. 7. Student Organisation. 8. Peasant Organization. 9. EBR. 10. Mukti Bahini. 11. Formation of all-party union. 12. Bangladesh Govt.	1. Popular Military Resistance 2. Refusal of Basic Needs of life 3. Refusal to serve the Military Establishment	1. Language fight ... 1948-54. 2. Parity phase ... 1956-58. 3. Autonomy ... 1968. 4. Revolution — Nov. 1968 to March 1969. 5. RTC — March 1969. 6. L.F.O.—November 1969 8. Waiting—December 1970-March 1971. 9. Postponement — February and March 1971. 10. Martial Law—March 1971. 11. Civil Resistance—March 1971. 12. Popular Military Resistance—March 1971. 13. Mukti Fauj and Bahini—March 1971 to this date.

II. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

	1 Period	2 Goals	3 Leadership
I. Pre-C.D.	... 7 December 1970 to 7 March 1971.	(a) Long Range. (b) Short Range.	1. Liberal. 2. Democrat.
II. C.D.	... 8 March 1971 to 25 March 1971.		3. Popular. 4. Firm.
III. Post-C.D.	... 25 March 1971 to date		5. Compromisive.

II. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

4		5		6		7	
Areas		Participants		Forms		Policy & Action Programme	
Rural	Urban						
1. Non-Taxation. 2. Change of Crop Pattern.	1. Taxational. 2. Administrative. 3. Legal. 4. Communicational. 5. Monetary. 6. Diplomatic. 7. Military. 8. Judiciary. 9. Educational.	1. Peasants. 2. Workers. 3. Political Parties. 4. E.P.R. 5. E.B.R. 6. Judges. 7. Students.		1. Peaceful. 2. Civil. 3. Popular Resistance. 4. Direct action. 5. Non-violent Action. 6. Fast.		(As given in the study)	
Effectiveness		9		10			
		Limits		Potentialities			
1. Total Response. 2. Threat to Existence of Military Rule. 3. Threat to Existence of Bureaucracy. 4. Even Yahya's wife threatens to fast. 5. Global public opinion isolates Government's opinion (except India). 6. Satyagraha by External Teams. (a) Omega. (b) Boston. (c) Possible Islamabad March (d) Washington March.		1. Military Regime. 2. Closed Politics. 3. Minority Uncompromising. 4. Workers, Students of West Pakistan appeared to be silent. 5. Left Movement of the West appears schizophrenic.		1. Possible use of the technique at least in the Asian countries for freedom. 2. Possible use of the method of accelerating the autonomy movement in India.			

I. POSITION IN THE WORLD OF SOCIALIST THOUGHT

1	2	3
Pre-Marxian Socialism	Marxian Socialism	Post-Marxian Socialism
1. Utopian.	1. Dialectical Materialism.	1. Nationalization.
2. Ethical.	2. Economic Interpretation of History.	2. Growth of State Powers.
3. Particularistic.	3. Class Struggle.	3. Appropriation by Governmental sector.
4. Of logical relevance.	4. From each according to his ability to each according to his need.	4. Expansion of Industry.
5. Individualistic.	5. Withering away of the State.	5. Significant role of the power of the State.
6. Prescriptive.	6. Scientific.	6. Full Employment.
7. Non-analytical.	7. Total.	7. Goods for workers.
8. Generally Negative.	8. Proletarian Revolution.	8. Evolutionary Radicalism.
	9. Maximization of goods.	

I. POSITION IN THE WORLD OF SOCIALIST THOUGHT

4	5	Gandhi's concept of Socialism
Democratic Socialism	Autonomic Socialism	
1. Right of workers	1. Concept of National Colony.	1. Non-violent.
2. Welfarism.	2. Principle of Sovereign Autonomy.	2. Power as Trust.
3. Partial control on management.	3. Limitative Federalism.	3. Ultimate say of People's Power.
4. Socialization of property.	4. Expansive power of the States.	4. Inextricable relationship between Individual and Collective good.
5. Industrial growth.	5. Revision of the Concept of Integrated Currency.	5. Politics as best profession of life.
6. Parliament as instrument of change.	6. Modification in the concept of financial management.	6. Unto the Last.
	7. Military Autonomy.	7. Minimization of want.
	8. Full Taxational Power of States.	8. Village Republics.
	9. Democratic way of life.	
	10. Parliament as instrument of change.	
	11. Other non-Parliamentary methods.	

II. FROM CLASSICAL TO AUTONOMIC FEDERALISM

1	2	3
USSR	USA	Switzerland
1. Right of the States to secede. 2. Right to be Member of the UN. 3. No Finance Ministry of Union. 4. No Finance Minister of the Union. 5. Maximum of Autonomy to the States in Planning and Development. 6. States are not Provinces but Republics.	1. Double citizenship. 2. Double constitution. 3. Judiciary to arbitrate. 4. Residuary power to States. 5. State has right to tax.	1. Separate Constitution. 2. Right to secede. 3. Treaty-making power. 4. Defence power. 5. Independent Judiciary.
4	5	6
India	Federal Republic of Germany	East Bengal
1. States are not Provinces. 2. States have also right to tax. 3. Independent Finance Commission. 4. Division of power between the Union and the States. 5. Practically States are parallel Governments. 6. Multilingual. 7. Multi-cultural and religious.	1. Separate Constitution. 2. Executive power vested in the states. 3. Power of the Federation limited. 4. Residuary power vested in the States. 5. Separate flag of the States. 6. States of Concurrent Powers with the Federal Government.	1. Federal Polity. 2. Division of power. 3. Separate Currency System. 4. Taxational Power of the State. 5. States' power for managing financial system. 6. Military Autonomy. 7. 1200 miles Distance. 8. Two separate Territorial entities. 9. Two cultures.

E. IMPLICATIONAL

1	2	3
Bangladesh	Pakistan	India
1. Withdrawal of Pakistani forces. 2. Independence. 3. Return of Refugees. 4. Emergence of a Sovereign Bangladesh. 5. Parliamentary Politics enters Islamic area.	1. Crippling of Economy. 2. Possible weakening of military. 3. Ascendancy of Democracy. 4. Kashmir question may be solved. 5. Problem of Employment of military men. 6. Chinese friendship strengthened. 7. RCD strengthened.	1. Reduction of Centralization. 2. Revision of size of States. 3. Search for new politics. 4. Autonomy gets currency and trend of further autonomy to districts. 5. Happy with break-up of Theological State. 6. Angry with the lessons of the Movement. 7. Emergence of India as significant Power in South-East Asia.
4	5	
South-East Asia	World	
1. SEATO might weaken. 2. Likely settlement of Vietnam question. 3. Emergence of India as stronger Power in South-East Asia. 4. Muslim leadership for Indonesia.	1. Exposition of Weakness of UN. 2. Domestic Jurisdiction more rigid. 3. Effective Powers China & US (Negative attitude to Bangladesh). 4. Effective Powers USSR & India (Positive attitude towards Bangladesh).	



AREAS OF INQUIRY

A perusal of the above model cannot escape but a number of far-reaching conclusions. It seems that what has been initiated by the people of united Bengal in 1905 has been completed by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. But in the course of this crisis, the very identity of the two wings of Pakistan is lost.

It may be interesting to examine to what extent Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the champion of the peasants, workers and labourers. His scheme of transfer of power from the highest to the second highest level also deserves examination. It is further to be seen to what extent his six-point programme promises the transfer of power to innumerable functional units of decision-making. Cultural differences almost neutralize the role of religion and ideology whatever may be the level, space and occasion of the crisis. The concept of sovereignty that originated after the break-up of the papal system, feudalistic and monarchical absolutism and modern colonial and imperial power structure again faces crucial challenge from the various ethnical and cultural groups. Despite the advent of a functional culture, the size of the state does not seem to be sacrosanct and faces revision as its very huge structure neutralizes the initiative of its master—the people. The principle of citizenship concomitant with the territorial unit appear to be outmoded in the cross section of time as well as geography. The principle of political obligation faces deep crisis. The technique of civil disobedience has very limited scope for its practice in a controlled polity. Moreover, any experiment with such technique requires years of collective preparation. Otherwise tragedy becomes more apparent than the accomplishment of desired political goals. Hardly in the history of political development, the collective will of the people has been demonstrated especially through the instrumentality of election and civil disobedience and popular military resistance. Ultimately it is the culture of civil disobedience which will decide the fate of democracy as a way of life in this part of the world.

S. G. KASHIKAR

The Lessons of Bangladesh for India

THE BREAKING UP of Pakistan was a geopolitical necessity. As far back as in 1968, this author remarked : "The experience of the last twenty years shows that the structural anomaly of Pakistan—i.e. the separation of the two wings of Pakistan by the whole breadth of India—poses a very real danger to the national unity of Pakistan."¹ At one time it was fondly hoped that the bond of Islam was strong enough to keep the erstwhile two wings of Pakistan together. But it was very soon evident that the geopolitical differences were stronger than the undoubtedly strong bond of religion. Right from Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan down to Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan, every ruler of Pakistan lamented over the differences that divided the two wings of Pakistan. Before partition, the Muslims of the various provinces of undivided India, in spite of their differences of language, race, culture etc., formed in reality one community. The reason was geopolitical. "In the vast lands of the Indian subcontinent, the socio-cultural pattern of the people, both Hindus and Muslims, changes but slightly with the change of province but that creates a vast difference between the communities living in two territorial extremities if they are viewed exclusively of the intervening areas."² Thus, the Muslims of East Bengal were united with the Muslims of West Punjab only through the intervening Muslim communities of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, and the Uttar Pradesh. The differences between the Muslims of Bengal and Bihar, of Bihar and the Uttar Pradesh and of the Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab were peripheral and therefore they could feel that they belonged to one community. And it was this geographical interlinking that formed the basis of the feeling of oneness between the Muslims of

Bengal and the Punjab. The partition of India snapped these intermediate links away and thus knocked the very bottom off of Muslim unity. The creators of Pakistan neglected this fundamental geopolitical factor and consequently while dividing India into two parts, in fact divided the Muslim community into three parts, one living in India and the other two in the erstwhile East and West Pakistan. The division of India sowed the seeds of the division of Pakistan.

This has an important lesson for India. What is true of Muslims is equally true of all Indian communities. The Hindus of Kerala and the Hindus of the Punjab, for example, are complete strangers to each other if viewed exclusively of the intermediate links provided by Mysore, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. This is also equally true of the Muslim or Christian communities of India. In short, the national unity of the communities that live in this vast subcontinent depends very largely on the principle of geographical unity.

The geographical factor, however, explains the situation only partially. In fact the whole ecology of the Indian subcontinent creates what Stephen Jones has called 'a unified field'. Even the British Cabinet Mission of 1946 stressed the basic unity of Indian ecology, though in a different language. The history, geography, economy, literature, art, language, psychology, culture, philosophy and even iconography, i.e. the whole ecology of this region, indicates the complementarity of social communication and the supplementarity of physical environment. The partition of India grievously hurt the man-milieu relationship in this region. The 'movement' of partition disturbed the iconography that usually works for stability. This accounts for the utter instability of and intense upheaval in Pakistan ever since its creation. The ecological factor clearly indicates that the position of Pakistan is not much different from that of a meteor that breaks away from its environment only to get itself burnt away. This brings out a lesson for those regions of India where secessionist ideas may still be prevalent.

Bangladesh has yet another important lesson for India. In the pre-partition days, Muslims in general were taught to think of themselves as a completely distinct community from the Hindus. Bangladesh has shown that this is not true. A Bengali Hindu is nearer to a Bengali Muslim than a Punjabi Muslim. This again is an ecological imperative. Hindus and Muslims of India would do well to re-examine the scope of their separate identities in the light of the Bangladesh episode.

This, however, raises an important issue. Precisely because of the affinity between the Bengali Hindus and Muslims, the Pakistani Muslims consider the Bengali Muslims as less than Muslims. They think that the Bengali Muslims are hinduized. While inaugurating the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference at Jeddah on 29.2.1972, King Feisal of Saudi Arabia was reported to have said that the recent events

in Bangladesh were anti-Islamic.³ It is said that during the Bangladesh conflict a considerable number of Muslims in India had their sympathies with Pakistan and not with Bangladesh. This attitude implies that a Muslim who evinces any streak of non-Muslim influence is not a true Muslim. But this attitude shows complete ignorance of the historical process that universally controls the spread of a religion or a culture or a way of life. When a sampling is transplanted to a foreign land, it must adapt itself to the new soil and environment; otherwise it will simply not grow. This is true of all religions, cultures and ways of life that spread to foreign lands. We have it on the indisputable authority of Arnold Toynbee—one of the greatest historians of modern times—that “In so far as Islam won its way, it won it, like other missionary religions, by unavowedly receiving into itself many of the elements in the converts’ previous religions.”⁴ Thus we find many Christian and Zoroastrian elements in Islam. Even the original Islamic civilization, as Toynbee points out, developed out of the culture-compost of Syriac-Hellenic civilizations.⁵ Buddhism, which was originally Indian, acquired Burmese character in Burma, Ceylonese character in Ceylon, Japanese character in Japan and Chinese character in China. Otherwise it would not have flourished in those places. The secret of the spread of Christianity in various lands is its adaptation to the various environments. The same is true of Islam. It acquired Arabic character in Arab countries, Persian character in Persia, Malaysian character in Malaysia and Indonesian character in Indonesia. Similarly it acquired Bengali character in Bangladesh. This historical process of culture-compost is termed pseudomorphosis by Spengler.

Take Indonesia. Islamic culture was grafted on to the original Hindu culture there. Naturally many Hindu cultural elements became a part and parcel of the present Islamic culture of Indonesia. The stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata still persist and have become a part of the Indonesian culture. As Toynbee tells us, the birthday of Prophet Mohammad is celebrated there by staging puppet plays based on the Mahabharata.⁶ Does that make the Indonesian Muslim less of a Muslim?

On the advent of Islam to the Indian subcontinent, the process of pseudomorphosis had started. This more than anything else enabled Islam to spread to the various parts of the country. The converts adopted what they considered to be the essentials of Islam and assimilated them into their Indian way of life. This made the Muslims of India Indian Muslims, very much as the Muslims of Arabia have become Arab Muslims, of Persia Persian Muslims, and of Indonesia Indonesian Muslims. In short, the process of integration of Muslims into the national life of India had already reached a certain stage long before the advent of the English. How happy was this development is evident

from the following remarks of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan who as late as in 1884 considered the Indian Muslims to be a part of the Hindu nation. In his address to the Indian Association of Lahore, he said, "By the word nation I mean both Hindus and Muslims . . . In my opinion, it matters not whatever be their religious belief, because we cannot see anything of it; but what we see is that all of us, whether Hindus or Muslims, live on one soil, are governed by one and the same ruler, have the same sources of our advantage, and equally share the hardships of a famine. These are the various grounds on which I designate both the communities that inhabit India by the expression Hindu nation."⁷

However, the same Sir Syed later on tried to reverse his statement about this natural historical course based on pseudomorphosis by falling a victim to the divisive machinations of the British rulers and to the allurements of supposed greater immediate advantages of separatism to the Muslim community. Separatism bred advantages and advantages bred separatism. In order to prove that Indian Muslims formed a distinctly separate community, vigorous attempts were made to arab-persianize their culture, language, history etc. and to uproot them from their Indian moorings. This led to the creation of Pakistan. Once a separate Muslim State was created, the problem of national identity stared the new state in the face. "If we are not Indian Muslims, who are we? Are we Arab or Persian Muslims? No, then who are we?" West Pakistan has not even to this day solved this riddle satisfactorily, though gradually some realization is dawning on them. The erstwhile East Pakistan, however, has solved the riddle for herself. 'We are Bengali Muslims', they said. The neo-colonial attitude of West Pakistan accelerated the pace of this realization. At last the Muslims of Bangladesh have found out their true selves.⁸

This has a lesson for those Indian Muslims who are still under the spell of arab-persianization. We have it on the authority of some celebrated Muslim writers that a part of the Indian Muslims still keep themselves isolated from the mainstream of national life.⁹ Surely, sooner or later, the emergence of Bangladesh will help them discover themselves. They will realize that they are Indian Muslims, and that to be Indian Muslims is not in any way a diminution of being Muslims.

This, however, does not mean that there are no differences between Hindus and Muslims. In fact, the correct lesson of Bangladesh is that there are differences not only between Hindus and Muslims but between Hindus and Hindus and Muslims and Muslims. There are similarities too. In short, it confirms anew the oft-quoted principle of unity in diversity. But what it lays bare is that unity should not be stretched too far at the expense of diversity or diversity at the expense of unity. In either case dire consequences would follow. India is a land of many inter-communal and intra-communal diversities. Mutual respect, under-

standing, accommodation, equality and mutual benefit : these are the Panchsheel of a united country with diverse population. That is the supreme lesson of Bangladesh for India.

NOTES

¹ 'The Promise of Indo-Pakistan Tension'—Paper read by the Author at the All-India Seminar on Foreign Policies of South Asian States held at Jaipur, Feb. 1-6, 1968.

² *ibid.*

³ *The Times of India*, Bombay, March 2 1972.

⁴ Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vol. XIII, Ch. XIV, 'Islam's Place in History', Oxford University Press, 1961.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 473.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 673.

⁷ Rafiq Zakaria, *Rise of Muslims in Indian Politics*, Somaiya Publications, Bombay, 1970. p. 356 f.n.

⁸ This raises a new problem : The problem of the identity of Bangladesh *vis-a-vis* West Bengal. But that is not the subject-matter of this paper.

⁹ For instance : S. Abid Hussain, *The Destiny of Indian Muslims* ; S. A. Hasanian, *Indian Muslim—Challenge and Opportunity* ; Baker Ali Mirza, *Hindu Muslim Problem* ; Rafiq Zakaria, *Rise of Muslims in Indian Politics*.



P. D. GUPTA

The Future of Indo-Bangladesh Relations

THE ESTABLISHMENT of Bangladesh as a separate independent and sovereign entity is a landmark in the history of South-East Asia and is bound to have important and serious repercussions in many ways. In the first place, its creation represents both a consummation and a contradiction of the Lahore resolution of the Muslim League in 1940 which set afoot a movement for Pakistan on the basis of religious affinity alone. The resolution envisaged the creation of separate and independent Sovereign States in the Muslim majority zones in the West and East of India. The creation of one sovereign State of Pakistan in 1947 with a centralized administration, the two zones of which were to be under one Government, was a violation of this resolution. The State of Pakistan created in 1947 was not in conformity with the resolution which envisaged two independent and autonomous States; it was also a geographical monstrosity since the two zones were divided from each other by more than a thousand miles of intervening independent Indian territory. Not only was the land route between the two zones absent, but the direct air route could as well be disrupted, if and when the Government of India thought it fit to prohibit Pakistani traffic over its air space, as it did in 1970. The creation of an independent Bangladesh comprising the Eastern zone of Pakistan may, therefore, be regarded as an indirect fulfilment of what was desired in the Muslim League resolution of 1940. In another aspect, however, the creation of the new State was antithetic to the very conception of Pakistan being founded on the basis of a common religion to the exclusion of all other factors. For, in spite of common religious affinity, the people of the two zones differed radically in languages, customs, traditions and economic interests. In fact, the people of East Pakistan had more in common with their former fellow countrymen of West Bengal than with the people of West Pakistan, so much so that on the eve of partition an

attempt was made in 1947 to keep Bengal united. The movement, however, failed. Bengal was bifurcated, the Eastern part with its Muslim majority forming the eastern zone of Pakistan. Religious affinity, however, could not maintain harmonious relationship in the two zones. The rulers of Pakistan began to treat East Pakistan as a colony and to exploit her resources to the benefit of the Western zone alone. The people of East Pakistan were denied the due share of the economic development and were excluded from the higher ranks of the administration. An attempt was also made to force Urdu upon them and to deny them their own language and culture. The discontent grew in volume and a demand for regional autonomy was made. A general election took place in which the party of Mujibur Rahman won a thumping majority and was yet denied to enjoy the fruits of the victory. Instead, a terrible repression began, the outcome of which was an open revolt in March 1971 and finally the declaration of the independent State of Bangladesh. What followed is too recent to be enumerated in detail. Briefly they are : the barbaric atrocities committed by Pakistani troops ; the deliberate destruction of all who advocated the claims of regional autonomy ; the rise of Mukti Bahini as a heroic guerilla force ; crossing over to India of nearly ten millions of refugees—both Hindus and Muslims ; the involvement of India in a short but bloody war with Pakistan ; and the achievement of the independence of Bangladesh. The sole *raison d'être* for the creation of Pakistan was the claim of statehood on the basis of a common religion ; the revolt of Bangladesh knocked this theory on the head and proved conclusively that religion alone could never be the basis of nationality and that other factors like language, culture and traditions and economic interests were equally if not more important. Thus was the Pakistan resolution of 1940 based on the two nation theory falsified. Tajuddin truly remarked : Pakistan lies buried (in Bangladesh) under a mountain of corpses."

2. It is significant that the new State of Bangladesh has proclaimed itself to be a secular State with Bengali as its national language and Tagore's song 'Sonar Bangla' as its national anthem. It is safe to argue that it will develop and cultivate closer cultural, social and economic ties with the administration and people of West Bengal and therefore India.

3. The fact that the struggle by Bangladesh for independence was sought to be crushed by co-religionist countrymen of West Pakistan and it was helped to reach that victorious termination by the massive help of secular India has its own lesson both for Pakistan and for Indo-Bangladesh relations. It weakens the claims of Pakistan to statehood on the basis of a common religion alone ; it strengthens Indo-Bangladesh

ties and converts an erstwhile hostile front into a peaceful and friendly one. No longer needs India keep a large army to defend its eastern frontiers against hostile Pakistani forces; no longer would India be pestered and her economy disrupted by continuous bands of refugees, driven by uncongenial and insecure conditions from across an alien frontier. On the other hand, the establishment of a close friendship and harmonious relation between India and Bangladesh is bound to help the cause of peace, to make secure a frontier which was formerly the source of anxiety and needed careful watching, to blunt the edge of Chinese hostility and to strengthen the economy of the two regions. Both India and Bangladesh share the common ideals of democracy, secularism and socialism; both have proclaimed non-alignment as the sheet-anchor of their foreign policy and both have expressed their determination to work together for the promotion of peace and cultural, economic and industrial progress and to deal with common problems in a spirit of amity, goodwill and friendship. In this context the treaty made between Bangladesh and India on March 19 and the decisions which accompanied it and the trade agreement which followed it are of great significance.

4. *Indo-Bangladesh Treaty*—By this treaty both parties affirmed their determination to live in lasting peace and friendship with each other, to respect each other's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and to develop good neighbourliness and all-round co-operation. All forms of racialism and colonialism have been condemned and their elimination made the object of joint policy. The treaty provides for close co-operation in the international field and immediate consultation when either party is threatened with aggression. Neither party would give any assistance to any power indulging in military aggression against the other party nor would either party allow its territories to be used for military aggression or in any way which may constitute a threat to the security of the other party. It is further provided that if either party is attacked, both parties would immediately enter into consultation to take suitable action to remove the threat and thus to secure the peace and security of the two countries. Provision has also been made for co-operation in other fields i.e. economic, cultural and scientific.

The two parties agreed to make joint studies and take joint action in the field of flood control and in the development of river basin, in irrigation and hydro-electric power. In pursuance, agreement has been reached to set up a joint Rivers Commission to carry out a survey of the river systems serving both the countries and to take such measures as are necessary for flood control.

The Treaty also provides for the development of Trade between the two countries and for signing a separate trade agreement for the purpose.

In a joint declaration signed by the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh the policy of non-alignment and peace has been re-affirmed. Further the two Prime Ministers declared that the Indian Ocean area should be kept free from the rivalries and military competitions of the Great Powers. They express their opposition to the creation of land, air and naval bases in the area. It is their conviction that this is the only way of ensuring the freedom of navigation and safety of the sea lanes in the Indian Ocean for trade and commerce which is vital to the development and stability of the littoral States. The two Prime Ministers further express their determination to endeavour to make the Indian Ocean area a nuclear-free zone.

In fact, the Treaty, together with the accompanying joint declaration of the two Prime Ministers, was not only an assurance of continued friendship and mutual regard, they provide also for co-operation in every field of State activity which can be of common interest to both of the countries. Militarily, it provides a safeguard against aggression from any third party and co-operation in the field of international endeavour; economically, it will lead to the development of trade and industry to the mutual benefit of the countries; culturally, it provides for co-operative activity in the field of literacy, and scientific and cultural progress. More than the written word, the relations between India and Bangladesh are based on the one side on a lively feeling of gratitude and appreciation for the help rendered during a crucial and agonizing period of emergence of a new nation and, on the other, on a keen appreciation of a heroic struggle for freedom of an oppressed people to which India contributed, and on the common ideals of democracy, secularism and human freedom which inspire the two countries. It may be that the continued development of mutual confidence and co-operation and sharing of common ideals may lead to closer bonds than what exists at present between the two independent nations.

5. The establishment of Bangladesh as an independent secular entity is bound to have repercussions on the future of what remains of Pakistan. It is even now a union of discordant elements brought together by the common religious zeal fanned by the ambitions of a daring and power-hungry politician. The Pathans of the North West have long clamoured for an autonomous Pakhtoonistan; the Baluchis have their own local sentiment and the Sindhis also want local autonomy. What remains is a part of the Punjab which can no longer dominate all the units. The one unit scheme on which a great deal of stress was laid at one time in the name of national unity has now become a past history and Pakistan can exist only as a loose federation of differing elements. Militarily, Pakistan, in spite of the massive help from China and the U.S.A. and the active support of the Muslim coun-

tries has suffered a defeat from which it may take long to recover. Its recent experiences must have shown the futility of dependence upon foreign powers and the realization cannot be far distant as to where its true interest lies. It is in developing relations of friendliness and goodwill with its neighbours.

6. The problem of Kashmir also must be dealt with in the new context. The atrocities committed by Pakistan in its eastern zone in order to retain its hold there shows that the lust for domination and exploitation overrides the consideration of religious unity or humanism. The fact that most of the inhabitants of the Kashmir valley are co-religionist of Pakistani Muslims can no longer be enough temptation to unite with them, particularly when they must have realized that Pakistan Government welcomes neither democracy nor self-determination in its own territories. The people of Kashmir enjoy a large measure of democratic freedom which would be denied to them if they coalesced with Pakistan. The cry of political union on the basis of religion can no longer hold in the light of experiences in Bangladesh. Pakistan must, therefore, realize the realities of the situation and must cease to harp on the Kashmir problem. Only then can there be an abiding settlement between the two countries.

It may also be expected that the setting up of a separate independent State of Bangladesh will improve our relations with China. The cynical role of China which came out in support of the military regime in Islamabad has failed to pay her any dividends and the one-time pro-Chinese attitude of Moulana Bhasani and his followers has perhaps undergone a change. China must realize that in supporting Pakistan it not only violated her own professed cannons of self-determination but tried unsuccessfully to bolster up a regime which was bound to collapse through her own inherent contradictions. She must recognize that India is no longer the country which she wantonly humiliated in 1962. She has now developed a strength and a determination which would enable her to resist any expansionist designs on its territory. The best policy for both India and China will be to open a fruitful dialogue to iron out their differences on the basis of mutual accommodation, to forget old hostilities and to start a new era of goodwill and co-operation which would promote the cause of peace and stability in South East Asia. The U.S.A. would then no longer be able to play havoc in Vietnam. China, India, Bangladesh and other states of South East Asia working in close co-operation both inside and outside the U.N.O. could help in creating a new world of international co-operation, understanding and goodwill. On all counts India has emerged as one of the leading Powers destined to play an important role in international affairs.

RAGHUBIR CHAKRAVARTI

Bangladesh and India

THE EMERGENCE of Bangladesh has altered the political situation in South Asia. It has liberated what was practically a colonial outpost of Pakistan, and a neo-colonial base of the United States of America. It implies the rise and consolidation of a new national unit dedicated to peace and socialism. It means the reduction of power of imperialism in Asia, and the corresponding increase in the strength of the force of national liberation. It has definitely tilted the balance in favour of socialism, peace and progress.

Bangladesh is a test case for the survival of freedom and democracy in Asia. At a moment when human and democratic values were threatened in this continent by the strategy and tactics of neo-colonialism, under the patronage of the United States of America, Bangladesh has held high the torch of liberty, equality and fraternity. She illustrates once again that human rights will ultimately vindicate themselves despite all obstacles. As a successful culmination of a democratic upsurge, she has already become a symbol of new hope and aspiration.

Bangladesh and India are united almost inseparably, and will remain so for a long time to come. Geopolitical setting and common historical ties provide the solid basis of this bond. India envelopes Bangladesh practically from all sides. Therefore, any major development in either country will have a meaning and a context for the other. The Indo-Bangladesh Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Peace concluded in March 19, 1972 for twenty-five years is an evidence of their mutuality of interests. At any rate, the security of this entire region, especially of Bangladesh, will be largely determined by the relationship between these two States. Each country will have a vested

interest in the friendly relation with the other. Each will have everything to gain and nothing to lose from this relationship.

Bangladesh and India have become correlatives even in historical terms. India has become an integral part of the history of Bangladesh. India has always maintained a sympathetic appreciation of the Bangladesh movement. This movement, it may be recalled, originated as an assertion of linguistic identity and cultural individuality of the major section of the people of Pakistan. A cultural revolution paved the way for the demand of regional autonomy, which was rather forced into the direction of independence by the political myopia of the ruling classes of Pakistan. India followed these developments in the neighbouring country with interest, but maintained neutrality all through as it was only an internal issue of Pakistan. It was precisely because of this that Pakistani propaganda to project Bangladesh as an Indian conspiracy consistently failed to mobilize sufficient world opinion.

India sympathized with the cause of Bangladesh from the very beginning, and her sympathy definitely strengthened the cause. However, her involvement became more and more direct with the passage of time, and this involvement was the direct creation of Pakistan. Pakistan launched a genocidal war against the Bangladesh people on the midnight of 25th and 26th March 1971. Since then, India became a refuge of the persecuted. By and large, 10 million refugees were given shelter and that cost her 2.5 crores of rupees per day. This involved a tremendous burden for an already shaky economy, yet India did not hesitate or falter to honour this historic mission.

India patiently called for a political settlement of the problem, and repatriation of the refugees. She projected the issue as an international problem, and carried out an extensive campaign through a series of ministerial visits abroad. The personal trips and pleadings of the Prime Minister compelled many nations to wake up to the situation in Bangladesh. The cause of Bangladesh became virtually a cause of India and, through India, a cause of the world.

Indian support for Bangladesh was, in the meantime, enormously strengthened by the Indo-Soviet Treaty of August 9, 1971. This Treaty lessened the security risk of India for her sympathy with Bangladesh, and finally neutralized the international reactions in its bid to blackmail or intimidate her.

India's involvement became full and formal when she was invaded with an air assault by Pakistan on 3 December 1971. India had no alternative but to strike back. Within a fortnight, the combined operation of the indomitable Mukti Bahini and the gallant Indian forces finally liberated Bangladesh from the deadly clutches of Pakistan. Pakistan lost one-third of her airforce, one-fifth of tanks and a number of warships. One-third of her troops, who surpassed all records in

brutality and oppression, unconditionally surrendered to India and Bangladesh. Indeed, such a total victory within such a short period of time has been a rare experience of history. India proclaimed unilateral cease fire on the Western front. She has withdrawn all her troops from Bangladesh even earlier than the stipulated date. She has made remarkably friendly overtures to Pakistan, including proposals like unconditional bilateral talks and conclusion of no-war pact. India has thereby set a rare example of restraint in international relations. She fought completely for the noble cause of liberation of a section of the oppressed humanity. India has made a substantial contribution to the historical emergence of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh and India have become related to one another through 'blood, sweat and tears.' India has shared all the agonies and the tragedies of Bangladesh. This will provide a solid basis for friendship between these two States.

Indeed, this friendship becomes more significant by common ideological bonds and commitments. Both Bangladesh and India have accepted nationalism, secularism, socialism and democracy as directive principles of State policy. Nationalism will strengthen the sense of national identity and excellence. It will lead to a greater national integration. However, it will be a process rather than a culmination. Secularism will separate religion from the State and will place the State on the road to modernization. But it will require no less than a cultural revolution to revise age-old superstitions and beliefs. The secularism in India and Bangladesh will have a reciprocal influence on each other. Socialism will equalize opportunities and remove unjust discriminations. In a society where inequality prevails, it will be a most challenging programme, and it will have to defeat the vested interests by stages. Democracy is a government by discussion, which takes the form of parliamentary democracy in practice. Even in international sphere, they share the common policy of peace and non-alignment. Such a policy alone can preserve the identity and dignity of middle and small states in a world of unequal Powers. This unity of ideology will strengthen the bond of unity between Bangladesh and India.

India alone can guarantee the political independence and territorial integrity of Bangladesh at least in her initial phases. The fulfilment of Bangladesh's dream to become a Switzerland of the East will certainly depend partly on India. Such an oasis of peace will be of immense benefit to all. It will have to be guaranteed by Big Powers in the long run. At any rate, its course and development will be very largely influenced by India.

India is rendering substantial help for the rehabilitation of the uprooted humanity in Bangladesh. She has been extremely helpful in the survey of the resources and fixation of priorities. She is assisting

the rebuilding of the shattered economy of the land. Her help is regarded as crucial in the regeneration of agriculture and industry. India can assist Bangladesh with investment capital and technical know-how as Bangladesh can help India with raw materials of diverse kinds. Free trade between these two States will be mutually beneficial. Such a trade will be of great importance to the border states like Assam, Tripura and West Bengal. Bangladesh will offer a profitable market for Indian products. But India will have to keep vigilance so that the big business houses do not create any further problem by exploiting a lop-sided economy. Simultaneously, both Bangladesh and India will have to be careful, so that the resources of Bangladesh do not become a happy hunting ground for neo-colonial forces. Indeed, these two States may steadily move for an integrated trading community with other willing Afro-Asian Powers. Such a community will not only promote trade interests of the members but will provide an additional security against neo-colonial subversion. At any rate, India will be of tremendous importance and help to Bangladesh.

Reciprocally, Bangladesh will be of great help to India. Bangladesh will be her first friendly neighbour State. A hostile neighbour is a constant liability and a source of tension. It causes unnecessary anxiety and worry, and keeps engaged a good number of defence commitments. India has experienced such suffering for decades. Bangladesh will relieve India from this defence pre-occupation at least in the Eastern sector. It will have a beneficial effect even in the Western sector. A truncated Pakistan will find it extremely difficult to maintain a bellicose attitude to India, despite Sino-American instigations. In that context, even the Sino-American conspiracy to profit by Kashmir dispute does not seem to have much future. Bangladesh has literally broken the backbone of Pakistan. She has been reduced to a West Asian Power. In the long run, Pakistan will have little alternative to a policy of peace and co-operation in relation to India. She cannot any longer afford the luxury of the policy of confrontation with India.

Bangladesh will enable India to concentrate national energy and effort more on development than on defence. This, in its turn, will enable India to cultivate national power on a planned basis. Once this power is developed, India will be able to take a greater initiative and a bolder stand in world affairs. Such an initiative will re-orient the Indian image abroad. This new Indian posture has become clearly evident in the statements and attitudes of Indira Gandhi on the current Indian foreign policy. India will be able to play a significant role in the reduction of the influence of Big Powers in Asia. She will also inspire Asian Powers to assert their rights to determine their own destiny. This development has already opened up new frontiers and perspectives before many Asian States.

Current phase of friendship between Bangladesh and India should not be taken for granted. It should be followed up with care and attention. Moreover some of the foreign Powers will always try to create new tensions in order to destroy or weaken this friendship. Therefore, much of the future will depend upon the discriminating leadership of the two States.

At any rate, Bangladesh and India have set a new standard of international relations. Their co-operation and friendship will set a new example of peaceful co-existence for many others. They will provide the best security to stability and development in South Asia. They will become a determining factor in the future course of history.

PARIMAL KUMAR DAS

*India and Bangladesh :
A Projection into their Future Relation*

IN THE WAKE of the liberation of Bangladesh, India and Bangladesh have entered into a friendship Treaty on the line of the Indo-Soviet Treaty. A Trade Pact has also been signed between the two countries. These undoubtedly would strengthen the growing friendly relations between the two countries. However, the relationship between India and Bangladesh is going to be more complex than is usually considered. This is not being suggested with a view to raise an alarm or to hint at a critical situation that may or may not arise in future. No permanent relationship in the world can be taken for granted. It needs constant care and has always to be guarded against the foreign interference or manipulation.

For the formulation of a proper Indian policy in regard to Bangladesh, it is essential to go into the genesis of Bangladesh. The events leading to the creation of Bangladesh have brought into bold relief the unnatural and artificial partition of India in 1947. It is often argued, and not without justification, that the emergence of a Muslim middle class in the present Bangladesh became possible only after the ceation of Pakistan. In other words, in a united India, replacement of the Hindu *élite* of Bengal by a Muslim *e'lite* would have been an impossibility because of the preponderance of the Hindus in India. Thus, it is suggested that the partition was a historic necessity and that it was desirable. This argument, however, overlooks the fact that had India remained united it would have also been a democratic polity. And in a democracy the logic of number can never be ignored. In

the Indian Union, in various states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Mysore and Bihar the *élite* has undergone a material change in the process of democratization. Therefore, what is of utmost importance is the establishment of a State of democratic order. In other words, *élite* formation is more a function of a political system rather than of sovereignty.

It is presumed that the lesson of the experiences of the people of Bangladesh for the last quarter of a century will not be lost. They cannot allow any erosion of their identity. This is what no Indian, who has friendship between the two countries closest to his heart, can ever permit himself to forget. To emphasize the common destiny that binds the two countries together is not to suggest any curbing of the independence of either. Historical facts, geographical realities, economic endeavours and political exigencies point to the great peril of such a curbing.

Much has been said about the final burial of the two-nation theory in the wake of the emergence of Bangladesh. This is true to some extent. But on the graveyard of the two-nation theory, let not a monument of three or more nationalities be erected. The Indian national movement had rejected the theory of multi-nationality in the thirties and forties. Only those who chose to remain outside the mainstream of that movement talked of its validity. The Bangladeshis, the Indians and the Pakistanis, are the same people with different and independent political entities. They have mutually approximate experiences of history and a culture. It is regretted that in recent past, on several occasions, the people of "Hindustan" have gone mad; they had run amuck, the Hindus against the Muslims or the Muslims against the Hindus. Insanity and human degradation touched their lowest ebb in Bangladesh, when the Muslims were fighting against brother Muslims. Since partition, the Indians and the Pakistanis have fought four wars between themselves. The fact remains in spite of that no people on earth have greater closeness amongst them than the people of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

The partition of 1947 blurred our vision and narrowed our perspective. Emergence of Bangladesh has unfolded the possibilities of re-fashioning and re-structuring the state system in the 'Hindustan' peninsula. Bangladesh is a phenomenon that has unsettled a quarter-of-a-century-old settled fact. The colonialists, the imperialists and the power-hungry leaders of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League thought they had settled the problem once for all. No leader of India of 1947 can be absolved of the guilt of India's partition. The partition was an act of acquiescence with the communal re-ordering of politics both in Pakistan and India. In India, secularism exists more in the realm of ideas than in reality. One offshoot of partition is that

a large number of the Muslims, the largest single minority in India, have remained aloof to this day. This is a situation which both the ruling Hindu *élite* and the Hindu obscurantists in India have found useful to exploit. The Muslims of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the section, largely instrumental in the creation of Pakistan, is the worst sufferer. It has failed to merge its identity either into Pakistan or into Bangladesh. In India, it has abdicated its legitimate political role, and allowed itself to be subjected to the alternate pulls of communal politics or abject surrender to authority.

Bangladesh heralds a departure from the past and a projection into the future. Care should be taken that the phenomenon of Bangladesh is not 'Bengalized' — a negation of history, and a very retrograde step — but is instead, 'Hindustanized'. That way lies her fulfilment. India cannot look at the problem from the point of view of either Bangladesh or India alone, it has to look at it from that of the 'Hindustan' peninsula. In other words, the advent of Bangladesh should not encourage the stratification or balkanization in the subcontinent. The normalization of relationship between Bangladesh and Pakistan is as important for India as for Pakistan and Bangladesh. Undoubtedly a bold initiative, promoted by large-heartedness, and not by conceit, is required on the part of India in regard to Pakistan for the normalization of the situation. In order to help in the normalization of relationship between Bangladesh and Pakistan, Indo-Bangladesh relations are to acquire wider dimensions than mere closer contacts between the two Bengals. Unfortunately, the policies pursued by India in the post-war Bangladesh reflect a lack of understanding of these subtleties and an absence of perspective. As far as Pakistan is concerned India can ill afford to lose a civilian rule be it headed by an erratic, to a military regime led by a cool-headed dictator. Since Indo-Pak war, lifting of Martial Law on April 21, 1972 can be construed as the most significant gain for India. For this may strengthen the forces of democracy in Pakistan, even though the odds are still set heavily against it.

The democratic verdict of Pakistan as expressed in December 1970, threw up different political entities in the shape of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League in Bangladesh, Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples' Party in the Punjab and Sind, and Khan Wali Khan's National Awami Party and Jamat-el-Islam coalition in North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. Therefore, today Pakistan has a different look. President Bhutto alone does not represent Pakistan. It continues to be in turmoil. The happenings in Sind have a good deal of similarity with those that happened in Bangladesh in the early days of its movement. The most popular leader of Sind, G. M. Syed, has already talked of 'independence', if the demand of the Sind people for 'autonomy' is not conceded. N. W. F. P. and Baluchistan are not prepared to tolerate the dominance



of the Punjabis any more. Thus it would be a miracle if Pakistan of today remains one single entity. The super-Powers are aware of this and, hence, seem to be working on the basis of an alternate hypothesis.

The outcome of the Simla summit talks of the heads of the Governments of India and Pakistan shows that they failed to grasp the basic issues that had plagued the relations between India and Pakistan. The return of territory to Pakistan by India, in exchange of a promise to behave, can hardly be regarded as a positive step towards the settlement of the problem. Pakistan has yet to recognize Bangladesh. At the summit an effort should have been made to find out a permanent solution of the problem concerning India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The idea of a confederation of the three States should have been seriously mooted and subjected to a detailed scrutiny. The beginning might be made in the shape of a common market and a common communication system, followed by a common defence and foreign policy. It is however essentially necessary that the super-Powers keep away from the affairs of these countries, in whose affairs their increasing effective interference is growing evident and is indicative of a potential danger.

VISHNU KANT SHASTRI

Cultural Impact of Bangladesh Revolution on India

THIS is admitted that the inspiration of Bangladesh Revolution came from the urge of Bangladesh people to protect their culture from Pakistani cultural onslaught. The political and economic factors contributed a lot to this development but their role was secondary. The natural corollary of this proposition should be that deeper achievements of this successful revolution lay in the cultural field to which the political and economic changes must conform. Now, what are these cultural achievements?

First, it was demonstrated decisively that culture, usually a tolerant and accommodating life-force of a nation, when faced with annihilation, releases such all-pervading energy to protect itself as may annihilate the oppressor. Culture has been proved to be more comprehensive than religion. Language is an inseparable part of and a carrier of culture. It is self-defeating to try to suppress a fully developed language in the name of any make-believe.

Secondly, it has been proved beyond doubt that political division of a country on the basis of religion cannot altogether alter its culture nor can it debar it from inheriting the cultural tradition of the past.

Thirdly, it has become evident that a nation cannot be built up on the basis of religion alone, and by ignoring all other essential factors, and that religion cannot be misused as a cover to perpetuate the exploitation of masses either politically or economically.

It is yet too early to say what concrete changes will occur in the thinking and behaviour of Indian masses due to this revolution, but a few broad indications of their future course may be given here. At the outset it must be said that India as a nation largely held similar convictions. Hence, the Indians felt that this revolution vindicated the stand taken by them after partition of the country regarding secularism and cultural liberalism in tune with their democratic social order. Emergence of secular, democratic, socialistic Bangladesh will strengthen their conviction and encourage them to go ahead.

The first and foremost impact of Bangladesh Revolution on India seems to be a realization of the fact that it was wrong to partition India on the basis of religion in order to solve Hindu-Muslim problem. The two-nation theory of Jinnah lies deeply buried in East Bengal. Bangladesh sacrificed tremendously to prove that culture is greater and mightier than religion. The world saw with dismay and agony that East Bengalis, comprising 80% Muslims, fought a fierce battle against their co-religionists and erstwhile co-nationals to defend their culture, defying the repeated calls given by the leaders of the Islamic World to uphold the Islamic Unity of Pakistan. To an East Bengali Muslim, an East Bengali Hindu professing the same culture became closer than a Pakistani Muslim professing the same religion. The *Fatwah* given by the Arab Muslim religious leaders claimed that Bengali Muslims ceased to be Muslims as such, due to their so-called irreligious bias; this was however not taken seriously anywhere in the Islamic World. This shows the loosening grip of religion over the present day masses.

In the context of India, it can be safely said that the communal feelings of pre-partition days still lingering in the minds of a certain section of Hindus and Muslims further received a definite set-back. Bangladesh poet Humayun Azad has said in his poem "Griha Nirman" (House-construction) that 1971 was the year which corrected the mistake committed in the year 1947. I believe that he has spoken the truth which will be endorsed by millions of Indians. The year 1947 defied the common cultural heritage to give undue importance to difference of religion. The year 1971 recorded the gallant example of Bengalis, Muslims in particular, who defied the so-called religious dictates to protect their culture—a joint creation of all Bengalis—Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others. This will help the Hindus and Muslims of India, who still think in communal terms, to rise above it.

Similarly the Muslims of India today are trying to re-orient their outlook *vis-a-vis* Bangladesh. They witnessed a head-on clash between Islamic fanaticism and cultural nationalism taking place in Bangladesh in which the latter won. Muslim Bengalis there declared that they are Bengalis first and Muslims next. This spirit will leave an indelible mark on the hearts of Muslims in India also. It is an unfortunate fact

that somehow or other a large number of upper class Muslims in India traditionally took pride in claiming for themselves Iranian, Turkish or Arab lineage. In most cases, it was a poor make-believe : after the downfall of the Mughal Empire, the rich Muslim feudal lords and later on newly English-educated middle-class Muslims feared that they might be swallowed up by the large number of Hindus and hence they tried their best to keep themselves away from the main national stream. This sense of insecurity and emotional alienation was the main cause which goaded Indian Muslims to demand partition of India. The great poet Akbar Allahabadi has noted sarcastically the emotional alienation of Indian Muslims. His famous couplet runs thus :

*Peta Masroof Hai Kalarki Men
Dil Hai Iran Aur Turkey Men*

which means 'while the stomach is busy with clerical job, the mind lives in Iran and Turkey'. This tendency is also reflected in the Urdu Literature which used to be full of mythological stories, characters and characteristics of Persia and Arabia. Most Urdu writers took special pride in discarding words of Indian origin and importing a large number of Arabic and Persian words in order to demonstrate their separate identity with a sense of vanity. This means that to a certain extent due to those erroneous notions, the Indian Muslims were torn asunder from their own country, that is, India.

Pakistan was created due to this very feeling. She naturally tried her best to nourish and deepen it. First twenty four years of Pakistan had been a period of incessant *jehad* against Bengali Language, Literature and Culture on the pretext that these were not sufficiently Islamic. But Muslim Bengalis refused to be browbeaten and continued their struggle to the final success. They unhesitatingly declared that they inherited all that was best in Bengali culture, be it the literature of Chandidas, Krittivas, Kashiram Das, Bankim, Sarat, Rabindra, Jivana-nanda Das etc. or the thinking of Shri Chaitanya, Raja Rammohun Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Swami Vivekananda or the Bengali festivals, dances, songs, paintings etc. This does not mean that the Muslims of Bangladesh fully subscribe to the views expressed by these great men : they differ from them on many points and reject many of their postulates, yet they consider them as their fore-fathers and their achievements as their own in the same way as they consider Daulat Kazi, Alaol, Lalan Fakir, Nazrul Islam, Fazlul Haque, Suhrawardhy as their own. Badrud-din Umar, the noted thinker of Bangladesh, has coined a happy term to underline this change in Bangladesh Muslim mentality. He calls it 'Return of Muslims to their country'.

This practical example of sharing common culture, though professing different religions, should stimulate the thinking of Hindus and Muslims of India alike, making Hindus more liberal and Muslims more inhibited, freeing both the communities from medieval communalism and bigotry.

It may be argued that Muslims are in overwhelming majority in Bangladesh, and therefore, they do not feel insecure and may boldly experiment in the cultural field, whereas the Muslims in India are a minority and therefore, they want to preserve their separate entity, lest they may get lost. Regarding the first half of this argument, I want to stress that number is not the only criterion in cultural advancement. After all Panjabi Muslims also were and are in overwhelming majority in Pak Panjab but they did not accept Guru Nanak Dev and others as their forefathers and cultural repository, because they have been made blind to their common culture by their sheer communalistic approach and religious bigotry which the Bangladesh Muslims have overcome.

The second half of the above-mentioned contention is a self-defeating argument. No community can prosper by isolating itself, by closing its door to the new ideas and changes and dissociating itself from the mainstream. Muslims will be much happier in India when they consider themselves the co-inheritors of the whole of the Indian cultural stream, beginning right from the Pre-Vedic era to this day. It is heartening to note that Kurratul Ain Haider's famous novel 'Aag Ka Darya' (River of Fire) denotes this healthy state of Indian Muslim mind. Let us hope that this awareness which was limited to a handful of intellectuals only will now percolate down to the ordinary Muslim masses speedily due to the shining example of Bangladesh.

In the long run, isolation from the main national stream is definitely injurious to the community concerned. The case of Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh is a moot point in this context. They not only remained aloof from the local Bengali culture but undermined it as hybrid Hindu culture. At the instigation of West Pakistanis, they also tried to impose their own culture and language on the Bengali Muslims. By doing so, they did not serve the cause of either Islam or Urdu. They could not make themselves acceptable to Muslims of Bangladesh. This should be an eye-opener to those rabid communal-minded Muslims in India who somehow or other feel that they can remain as islands ignoring the mainstream of culture of this land and thus serve the cause of Islam and Urdu which they erroneously consider to be an Islamic language. I want to make it clear that this sort of thinking will further isolate them and actually harm the cause which is so dear to them. I have no reservation regarding Islam. I consider it to be a great religion, moreover, an Indian religion, because it is professed by a large number of Indians. The same holds good for Christianity, Zoroastrianism

etc. But followers of all Indian religions (Hinduism being no exception) must also take into account the fact that these religions are to be developed and practised as Indian religions in harmony with other religions and culture. I may point it out here that the great Sufi poets, Maulana Daud, Kutaban, Malik Muhammed Jayasi and others tried their best to make Islam amiable to Indians by presenting it in peoples' language, imagery and style, permeated with Indian culture. This healthy tendency was obstructed by attempts to develop Urdu as an exclusive Islamic language by discarding from it the words of Sanskrit origin and importing in their place a large number of obsolete Arabic and Persian words. The Lucknow school of Urdu poets is to be particularly blamed for almost un-Indianizing Urdu.

I want to emphasize that I consider Urdu to be very much an Indian language and I also maintain that it has got a future in India only and not in Pakistan. Bangladesh, which was erstwhile East Pakistan, has already rejected Urdu. West Pakistani provinces, e.g., Sindh, Baluchistan and N.W.F.P. have started demanding that Sindhi, Baluch and Pushtu respectively should be their state languages. Pak-Panjabis are supposed to be patrons of Urdu in Pakistan, but recent developments show that even Pak-Panjabi intellectuals have started demanding that Urdu should be replaced by Panjabi in Pak-Panjab. Noted Urdu poets of Pak-Panjab like Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Hafiz Jullundhri and others also paraded the streets of Lahore in support of this claim of Panjabi. Urdu has got no base in Pakistan as it is not the mother tongue of the local Pakistani Muslims. Only migrants from Northern India speak this language as their mother tongue. Sooner or later, the masses there will not tolerate this imposed language. That is why Iosh Malihabadi has regretted that he committed a blunder by going over to Pakistan as, in his opinion, Urdu will have no place of importance in future Pakistan.

I maintain that Urdu will definitely prosper in India. But what sort of Urdu will it be? Naturally it will accept common Indian terms, restrain the use of uncommon Arabic and Persian words and liberally use the Indian background for its literature. I wholeheartedly support the feelings of Jamil Majahari, a noted Urdu poet of Bihar, when he says:

*Keeje Na Jamil Urdu Ka Singar Ab Irani Talmihon Se
Pahanegi Bidesi Gahane Kyon Yeh Beti Bharat Mata Ki?*

(Jamil, Do not decorate Urdu with Persian allusions any more; why should this daughter of Bharat Mata put on foreign ornaments?) I also contend that this is not a new trend. Mir Taqui Mir, the greatest Urdu poet, was also against the indiscriminate use of Persian

and Arabic words in Urdu. He brought his point home befittingly when he said :

*Kya Janoon Log Kahate Hain Kisko Surure Qualb
Aya Nahin Hai Lafz Yeh Hindi Zaban Ke Beech.*

[How can I know what people mean by 'Surure — Qualb' (ecstasy of heart) as this word is not prevalent in Hindi language.] Of course, all those Arabic and Persian words which have become popular by long usage should be retained to enrich not only Urdu but other Indian languages as well. Urdu is a beautiful language and its literature, specially poetry, is one of the finest we have. It will and must develop freely in India in line with other Indian languages, taking pride in its Indian origin.

Sometimes it has been suggested from some quarters that independence of Bangladesh will provoke disintegrating forces in India, and following her example, some of the states may also like to secede from the Indian Union. The protagonists of this viewpoint may also argue that Bangladesh might have rejected the Two-Nation theory, but this does not follow that she has supported One-Nation theory in the sub-continent. They may continue that for all practical purposes she has made three nations in the subcontinent and her language-based nationalism breeds ill for multilingual India. This is a frightened man's reasoning and is untenable when properly examined. India has been prudent enough to accept the regional variations of her culture and she has never tried to impose uniformity in the name of Unity. The different language groups may have their peculiarities but they enrich Indian culture as a whole and make it more colourful. As Mahadevi Varma, a great Hindi poetess, has observed : Indian culture is like a rainbow having different colours to make it one whole. This attitude is not a new one and is well ingrained in the minds of the vast majority of Indian people. One can be justly proud of his regional specialities and at the same time be loyal to the All-India concept of one great common culture and a great nation. From the early times, we find in Bengali literature poets singing in praise of Banga Janani and Bharat Janani without any fear of contradiction. Bankim, Rabindra, D. L. Roy, Nazrul Islam and many more may be easily cited to prove this statement. The same holds good for other provinces also. It should be remembered that Pakistan was and is an artificial political concept whereas the concept of one India has a long historical and cultural background. Emergence of Bangladesh in no way can jeopardize this deep underlying cultural unity of India. In spite of occasional outbursts of a few hot-headed frustrated politicians, India does not face any serious challenge to its cultural integrity and its multilingual One-Nation theory.

In fine, I want to repeat that the cultural values vindicated by Bangladesh Revolution were very nearly those which had been held high by Indian people in general. Their ratification by Bangladesh has definitely helped to clear many prejudices of certain sections of Indians who were sceptical regarding these values for one reason or the other. I believe that the brotherly feelings between Bangladesh and India will grow stronger and stronger as time passes because they share the common cultural values, and may help to create a new atmosphere of co-operation and friendship in the Hindustan peninsula.

N. C. BASU RAY CHAUDHURY

Bangladesh—A Tonic for India

IF 1967 WAS a watershed in India's domestic politics, 1971 witnessed a breakthrough for India's leadership in the field of foreign affairs. To have assisted at the birth of a new state is a unique and exhilarating experience for a country that had been accustomed to being at the receiving end of events. The balance of forces has been altered and a new situation emerged. To match the Sino-American power equation with a new Indo-Soviet equation in anticipation of an impending confrontation with Pakistan over Bangladesh was to break new ground in the field of foreign policy. This might be regarded as an exercise in non-alignment or alternatively, re-alignment by observers of the political scene. But for India it was itself part of the politics of survival for her and for a new state struggling to be born. It was a world in which the guardians of the free world and the champions of international proletarian revolution were found to follow disturbingly parallel policies over Bangladesh, and seek a political accommodation.

Indira Gandhi's act of political midwifery provoked sharp criticism from those who were understandably in favour of maintaining the *status quo*, and did not like to see a strong India emerge. But India's assistance to a people resisting tyranny and genocide had also its admirers on both sides of the Atlantic. The mere fact that Bangladesh forced people to take sides either for or against the change, and stirred a wide-ranging debate was an excellent political education for Indians. Nothing educates a nation in international relations, and compels heart-

searching so much as a crisis testing its basic values and even its security. If Bangladesh is grateful to India, we in this country have no less reason to be thankful to our eastern neighbour. The circumstances might have played into India's hands because of the political ineptitude of Pakistani leaders, the immobilism of the international community, and a co-operative and friendly Soviet Union. But India needed a cool courage and calculation to recognize the moment of destiny, and act judiciously and decisively. Bangladesh has added a new dimension to our self-confidence and to our techniques of policy-making.

In the process of facing the challenge, India has learnt not a little of the new science of crisis-management. In the post-1967 period, New Delhi had become quite an adept in managing crisis on the home front. The need to handle a tragedy on her door-steps that quickly expanded into India's called for an enormous amount of improvisation and adaptation. India's leadership has absorbed a good deal of the art of graduated and controlled response to external threats. That New Delhi has refrained from undue crowing over its triumph, pulled out Indian troops from Bangladesh well ahead of schedule, and advised its diplomats to walk softly in Dacca shows a remarkable degree of restraint and maturity.

To say that India's response to an unprecedented and difficult situation was governed by considerations of national interest and self-preservation is no exaggeration. A like-minded, stable and friendly neighbour linked to India by ties of geography, culture, trade, transport and language is an asset of incalculable value. India saw in the liberation movement a reaffirmation of her own values of nationalism, secularism, social justice, and democracy. These values had become dimmed with the passage of time, Bangladeshis had gone down in their struggle, every thing that India stands for, and cares for, would have been in jeopardy. It was the supreme achievement of the intellectuals, students and the freedom fighters of Bangladesh to have brought our own ideals back to life and given them a new meaning through a non-sectarian Bengali nationalist movement.

Bengalis on this side of the border were thrilled to see a linguistic nationalism defeat the dubious ideology of nationalism based on religion. There is no other part of the world where the same poet had provided two neighbouring states with their national anthems. In West Bengal in recent years Tagore had come to be identified by the average literate Bengali with his songs and his dance dramas. That his ideas could inspire a people to rise against injustice and exploitation was a unique experience. All on a sudden the phrase 'Sonar Bangla' came to have a significance quite apart from its lyrical and idyllic connotation. One was reminded of Rabindranath's role in the days of the Swadeshi movement. About him B. C. Chatterjee has written : "The

sureness of accent with which he pronounced his faith in his country and its future took India by storm. . . . The Bengali stepped right out of his dead self—a miracle of resurrection”.¹ For the Bengali of West Bengal, Bangladesh has achieved this ‘miracle of resurrection’ through a rediscovery of Tagore. Every effort of the Pakistan Government to purge university syllabi and radio programmes of the spirit of Tagore and to discover in his writings ideas alien to Islam seemed to stiffen resistance and set East Pakistan in a course that ultimately led to Bangladesh. And Sheikh Mujib with his profound devotion to the poet was the symbol of this resistance to the Pakistani anti-Rabindranath crusade.

For West Bengal troubled by inter-party clashes, the drama of the struggle between a resurgent democracy and a military dictatorship had a special message. There was a stark contrast between the national upsurge in Bangladesh and the routinized violence and fury that had become a part of life in this state. There was the widespread feeling that while men in the other Bengal were creating history, this Bengal was stagnating and decaying in a Hobbesian nightmare that seemed to lead nowhere. The traditionally romantic people of this state longed for a leadership that could end interparty killings, and embark on reconstruction. A student who had just got her M.A., and a university Vice-Chancellor in his fifties, told this writer on the same day in early February 1971 rather gloomily that West Bengal had no leader comparable to Mujib — someone to deliver the state from its agony. Sm. Gandhi’s pre-election call to banish poverty and her victory had infused a new hope. But the Democratic Coalition Government which assumed office in April 1971 foundered on its precarious majority.

The military crackdown of March 25, the declaration of independence by Bangladesh, the influx of refugees, and the heroic defiance of a brutal colonial regime were enough to stir deep emotions on this side of the border. Emotions, by themselves, however, do not win a war against a modern army. They have to be backed up by suitable policies, which have to be translated into decisive actions.

India’s initial reaction at the government level was one of inactivity and caution. There was, first of all, the compulsion of history. Any initiative the government took would be liable to be interpreted as motivated by the traditional hostility between India and Pakistan rather than one of genuine concern for the suffering of East Bengal. There were to be no rash deeds. Recognition of Bangladesh would have to wait till the proper moment for it arrived. There was also some anxiety about the possible reaction of Pakistan’s Big Power friends to Indian action. Pakistan had used its friendship with China and the U.S.A. to threaten India with dire consequences for her support to the cause of Bangladesh.

Nothing perhaps roused Indian opinion so much as the fact that the same government which had organized and supervised the elections which had given Mujib's Awami League 167 of 169 of the East Pakistan seats in the 313-member National Constitutional Assembly was subsequently dubbing him a traitor without a change of basic conditions, and using military force to repudiate the verdict. Within the state of Pakistan the more populous eastern region had always been exploited by the western ever since independence. Islamic solidarity — the professed foundation of Pakistan — had not prevented that exploitation. And later a reign of terror had been unleashed to flout the people's mandate.

As sympathy for what used to be East Pakistan surged through the country Sm. Gandhi was shrewd enough to realize that the Government had to tune its policy with the mood of the people while conforming to the norms of international conduct. Hence the Indian attempt to lobby world opinion to try to relieve the agony of a nation in distress. It was also designed to convince the world that Pakistan's internal problem had become India's internal problem with the spill-over of refugees.

As the burden of financial costs and social tensions arising from the contrast in expenditure for refugees and that for the local poor assumed staggering proportions the pressure on the Government either to go to war with Pakistan or to recognize Bangladesh became extremely strong. An independent Bangladesh, it was argued, would deprive Pakistan of East Bengal foreign exchange earnings which helped her to buy arms, and undermine the economic basis of her military machine. It would through a restoration of economic links lead to a revitalization of the economy of both the Bengals, and reduce production costs over the entire eastern region. But more seriously a protracted insurgency, combined with inflation and unemployment, would have an unsettling effect on this region. Bengali people might feel that Bengali lives meant nothing to the rest of the country. Would *The Disinherited State* of West Bengal get completely alienated from India and its politics?²

Few Westerners have understood India's difficulties so well as the well known British journalist John Grigg. He observed: "... it is doubtful if any other country in the world would have borne them so patiently for so long ... above all, we ought to reflect that India's cause is, in the broadest sense, our cause, for India is practically the only country in the Third World which has preserved and cherished our legacy of freedom ... Indira Gandhi is too far-sighted a statesman to have any expansionist aims. Her sole desire is to say goodbye to the refugees."³

President Nixon reporting to the Congress predictably took a different view of India's objectives.⁴ He said: "during the week of December 6, we received convincing evidence that India was seriously contemplat-

ing ... the destruction of Pakistan military forces in the West. We could not ignore this evidence." Nowhere in his Report has Nixon produced any evidence in support of his contention. It seems to be an odd sort of logic to lay the burden of proof not on the accuser, but on those who are likely to question or deny the charges. The American President had taken the position that "political settlement between East and West Pakistan was the key to ending the crisis." With the facts about Bangladesh there for all who cared to see, nothing but the wearing of political blinkers could have produced a statement of this kind. The pre-emptive strike by Yahya Khan at the Indian airfields, and the unsettling effects of refugee influx on India's economy, politics and society have been conveniently ignored. In the debate between American democracy and American strategy the principles of the Founding Fathers and the inalienable rights of man yielded place to Realpolitik.

In fact neither the United States nor China could be expected to be seriously distracted from their global strategic outlook by 'local' difficulties like the Bangladesh holocaust.

This had its effect on the United Nations as well. The inactivity of the world body as a peace-keeping organization drew some sharp comments from Senator J. William Fulbright.⁵ In Fulbright's view the Security Council had not interceded to prevent an armed conflict "because of the self-seeking of the great powers, each of which perceived and acted upon the situation not on its merits, and certainly not in terms of human cost, but in terms of its own shortsighted geopolitical interests. Moreover, the Security Council waited until war had actually broken out and an Indian victory seemed certain before attempting to intervene."

The Indo-Soviet Treaty was in a sense a breakthrough for Indian foreign policy making. The bipolar World has come to an end. In a situation of a triangular constellation where A might combine with B against C in one set of circumstances, and with C against B in a different set, India needed the firm support of at least one super-power to deal with a fast changing world. The Soviet Union had always a better understanding of India's geopolitical importance than the Americans. Normally Moscow would have liked to have a foothold in both Dacca and Islamabad. But when it came to making a choice between India and Pakistan, it had no hesitation in deciding where its real interests lay. Certain harmonious relations had been developing between India and the Soviet Union since the fifties. The Gromyko pact was a formalization of these relations. The bulk of Soviet investments outside that country were in India. Announcement of Nixon's visit to Peking must have created tremors of uneasiness in both Moscow and New Delhi. Kissinger's flight to Peking via Pakistan held out the ominous suggestion

of a prospective Washington-Peking-Islamabad axis hostile to India. That the December war was short and limited was, apart from Pakistan's military mistakes, was due to India's superior strategy, and the co-operation of the liberation forces in Bangladesh. It was also due to the deterrent effect of the Indo-Soviet Treaty on the potential involvement of the other Big Powers. The Soviet Veto gave India a much-needed protection against an adverse vote in the Security Council. Moreover, South Asia is a region where the U.S.A., by Nixon's own admission, had no pre-eminent position of influence.

Bangladesh posed a serious challenge to India's leadership and stability. Continued guerilla warfare would have a destabilizing effect on the entire eastern region. But New Delhi had to co-ordinate its own responses with those of the international community. South Asia is a fundamentally fragile area. This is the ideological crossroads of the World. It is the cockpit of the Powers. The dozen countries between Rawalpindi and Saigon contain nearly a quarter of the world's population. This is also a quarter which includes most of the world's poorest peoples. Local problems tend to be overlaid by the rivalries of the three Great Powers. Against the background provided by a possible Sino-American rapprochement New Delhi had to walk warily. To handle the situation in Bangladesh, to initiate a new offensive on the diplomatic front, to win a war with a country artificially strengthened by military hardware received from all the Big Powers, to send back the refugees, and help Bangladesh with all the economic and technical assistance we can afford were tasks taxing all the resources of the Indian leadership.

The war in Bangladesh has destabilized the external environment for India. There is a new perception of the interdependence of foreign and domestic affairs. The Indo-Soviet Treaty, no matter how one views it, marks a turning point in India's external relations. If there has been some anxiety about India falling too much under Soviet sway, one has also noted the confidence on the part of New Delhi in its ability to manage the Soviet relationship to India's advantage. Our relation with South East Asian countries calls for a new flexibility of approach. The making of foreign policy in a period of new challenges to our security is no longer a matter of esoteric exercise. The decision to have a high-power Foreign Policy and Planning Committee under the chairmanship of D. P. Dhar, was no doubt a crisis decision to meet a crisis situation. But its functions would seem to touch upon all that is salient for making open and secret decisions about foreign policy. Even domestic policies having a bearing on external relations were likely to fall within its scope. This may be a small beginning in the process of defining long-term and short-term objectives of and threats to India's security. If the Dhar Committee were transformed into a per-

manent National Security Council dealing with both the planning of foreign policy and national security, it would be a distinct gain derived from our experience of the Bangladesh War.

The defeat of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh have given India's national psyche a bigger boost than anything since independence, and accounted partly, at any rate, for Sm. Gandhi's overwhelming victory in the State Assembly elections. But it has a more important lesson. Bangladesh has vindicated our commitment to secularism as superior to religious bigotry, and our adherence to democratic political processes as superior to rule by military dictators. The new state has imposed new responsibilities on India. For one thing we cannot allow a people for whom we fought to go bankrupt. But Bangladesh has also been a source of the renewal of our sense of cohesion. It has made us aware of the challenges thrown by the new international balance of power. These are gains not to be measured in monetary terms alone.

The idea that military rule is a panacea for all our political and economic evils will have been discredited by the experience of Pakistan. Whatever else the rule of Generals and Field Marshals might achieve, it fails to act as a gap-closer between the governors and the governed, and between the whole and the parts. Nothing integrates like a political party. Party is the transmission belt conveying pressures and grievances building up at the grassroots to the centre of decision-making. Nothing corrodes the professional competence of an army so much as involvement in politics. Soldiers and civil servants may not only be found wanting in the politician's skill of mixing, but may eventually end up by losing even the capacity to fight. The surrender of a 90,000 strong, well-equipped army within an amazingly short time was no accident. The 13-year old military rule had something to do with the outcome of the 13-day war.⁶ This is a point which the Bengal conflict should bring home to the enthusiasts of army rule.

If military action for the liberation of Bangladesh has earned for India a new respect from much of the world, it has also imposed on her new liabilities and responsibilities. Every war has been exacting a price in the form of inflation. This was the case in 1962 and 1965, and 1971 has only aggravated the process. The erosion of the living standards of the fixed income groups and the rising costs of all plans and projects could have far-reaching political consequences. It is not only the organized and the articulate who have their economic distress.

Secondly, India has acquired a new primacy and political weight in the affairs of the subcontinent. Her postures and policies will matter significantly in any settlement that is worked out in the international relations of the area. Instability in Bangladesh and Pakistan



could breed an array of new and costly problems for India if only in the form of a flow of new refugees. How Bhutto and Mujib go about the business of nation-building is something that will be watched with interest by all students of modernization. Dealing with an identity-conscious Bangladesh and a Pakistan with its serious trauma will provide a testing time for Indian leadership.

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SATYESH C. CHAKRAVARTY

Nationalism and Components of Social Change in Bangladesh

THE RECENT EMERGENCE of East Pakistan as the sovereign state of Bangladesh has aroused interest of diverse kinds amongst various social groups of South Asia. This emergence represents a historical process whereby what could have been the least revolutionary social mass, the peasantry, was placed directly in contact with the urban political *élites* and co-ordinated and canalized into a political revolution. In the whole of South Asia such coherence between the masses, the intelligentsia and the political *élites* had rarely happened in the past. Judging by its external format, this phenomenon of Bangladesh is accepted as another instance of struggle for self-determination emerging from a common ideological base of nationalism. It is also accepted that a political revolution has been achieved, while the social revolution is yet to begin. Consequently, speculation regarding the viability of the socio-economic base of Bangladesh for sustaining this political revolution with or without social change is now decidedly within the purview of academic enquiry.

Bangladesh is not an isolated entity within South Asia. Hence the import of the public consensus regarding the success of political revolution in Bangladesh has far-reaching implications. This may easily lead to the growth of diverse patterns of aspirations amongst many other communities living in this part of the world which may not necessarily be coherent with the patterns of polity that they have so far belonged to. In order to anticipate the possible nature of such aspirations the present exercise on speculations and questions about Bangladesh has been deemed necessary. To keep such speculations

within permissible limits I propose to review the sociological content of this political revolution as the primary determinant of social change in Bangladesh. The conclusions arrived here will have mainly speculative value.

SOCIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Viewed in its proper historical context, the political revolution in Bangladesh is a successful consummation of a revolt of the Bengali masses against the domination of a different linguistic community upon their polity. This dominant linguistic community had used the state-political apparatus in the economic and political spheres in such a way that the already unbalanced demographic situation within the eastern component of the state of Pakistan was further upset by non-commensurate deprivations. Language thus emerged as a symbol not only to identify the Bengalees as a unique social group, but also to isolate them as distinct or different from the oppressors. This symbol gradually produced a psychological, sociological and political rift within the whole polity of Pakistan. Nationalism that emerged, therefore, required the nationality to become co-extensive with a state, whose geographical boundaries were already given as a distant territory from the land of the oppressors. The political revolution in Bangladesh has merely projected this nationalism as that of a nation-state, more precisely, that of a unitary nation-state. Such a unitary nation-state is a completely new phenomenon in the realm of South Asia.

Language had provided in the past a cultural rallying point for national sentiment and organization in other parts of the world also. The case of Bangladesh is, therefore, not a unique historical phenomenon. It is also well known that the geographical entity of the polity that was affected by such rally of national sentiments varied from place to place. For example, the 19th century Czech nationalism based itself upon a portion of a state, whereas the Polish nationalism under the partition based itself upon the memory of a former state. Such illustrations no doubt prove that nationalism becomes the dominant circle of attachment for different people at only particular times of their respective history. But these do not provide any unique model to explain how such validation of attachments is achieved by the given community of people at only a specific stage of their history. The patterns which have emerged so far are indeed diverse.

However, it is common to all societies that nationalism becomes the dominant circle of attachment only when the demands placed by such attachments are consciously recognized by the masses. The sociological contexts of the recognition of such demands by the masses are

found to vary according to the nature of development and achieved level of consolidation of economic systems to which the given communities belong. Viewed in this way, it is possible to identify two different socio-economic constructs or ideal-types into which the global variations of nationalist movements can be conveniently grouped.

The first of these constructs may be styled as the classical model which encompasses the historical experience of Western Europe. For example, in Western Europe, the consolidation of the states as meaningful political and economic entities had normally *preceded* the serious emergence of nationalism. The people in such areas became increasingly conscious of their common situation and, consequently, nationalism emerged before them as a set of demands about how to live together, to realize aspirations collectively or to overthrow a rejected order if necessary. Such conscious realization of the common situation was obviously a function of the gradual consolidation of the political economy, the progressive integration of the local economic bases with the national market, of the consistent decomposition of the ascriptive political commitment of civil society to any given ruler or group controlling the political society of these communities of people. The increasing fluidity of allegiance to the interest-oriented non-ideological goals converged upon nationalism as the dominant circle of attachment when the need for consolidating a political society suitable for the sustenance of the ethics of the civil society became apparent. Nationalism, therefore, became co-extensive with not only the nation-state, but also with the integrated national economy.

But, in countries where the consolidation of states as distinct economic entities had been delayed, where the political economy had been more suitable for expropriation rather than appropriation of wealth by its people, the demands of nationalism upon the masses contained a political call for common resistance. The consistent decomposition of the civil society without compensation identifies the state-political apparatus as the instrument of oppression. Therefore, in such countries, nationalism is made to satisfy primarily the need *not* to belong to some community, *viz.*, the oppressors in control of the political apparatus. Hence, the demand for establishing political hegemony precedes the consolidation of civil society. In other words, the ethnic necessity to generate allegiance between the diverse interest-oriented goals within the civil society is made to remain subordinate to the ideological format of the political society that nationalism vindicates. The case of Bangladesh belongs to this second type of socio-economic construct.

In countries of this type to which Bangladesh belongs, after the successful annihilation of the common enemy is achieved, nationalism may not any longer remain the dominant circle of attachment for

the masses unless or until their political sovereignty is threatened by external agencies. Neither does nationalism facilitate the value-orientation of the people for social revolution. The reason is obvious. The convergence of nationalism with the freedom movement dehistoricizes the masses in the first instance from their former political attachments, then drives them in a dynamic manner to capture the state political apparatus, and ultimately establishes a dichotomy within the whole polity where the institutional format of the political society remains functionally unrelated to the civil society. Throughout the course of the freedom movement, the issues related to the reconstitution of the shattered civil society are kept subordinate to the goal of attaining political revolution. Consequently, after the political revolution, the demand for rapid socialization of the state political apparatus dominates the social scene. If this demand is admitted by the dominant *élites*, then not only the possibility of violent mass upsurge for social revolution gets eliminated but also the entire process of social transformation gets slackened down in subsequent years. It is no ideological assertion, but a simple generalization rooted in empirical observation, that the prime goal of nationalist political revolution is the socialization of the state political apparatus and not the socialization of the instruments of production for the reconstitution of the civil society.

However, we may admit that none of the nation-states can rely solely upon one objective. The case of Bangladesh may prove to be a divergent type from any of the two empirically derived constructs, for nationalism is a sociological, and not just a logical, category. At the same time it should be reasonable to assume that the fate of Bangladesh in this regard will not be guided by chance factors alone. On the other hand, it is more likely than not that the process of socialization of the state political apparatus and, for that matter, the process or social transformation or social revolution in Bangladesh will be primarily determined by the integrals and the linkage that the nationalist *élites* have developed in the course of the freedom movement in that country. Hence the legitimacy of any speculation in this regard will depend on how realistically the values and meanings of the integrals and the linkage are assessed.

COMPONENTS OF FREEDOM MOVEMENT

The entire history of the freedom movement in Bangladesh need not be recounted here. Instead, we may choose to identify only those components of this movement that are likely to influence the course of social transformation in this part of the world. It is admitted that this selection process will be subjective, and, hence, no attempt will be made to

describe some of these components as more important than others. It is a well known fact of history that the significance of collective memory in social consciousness is essentially transient. Therefore which set of memory will be picked up by which *élite* group is a function of the type of aspiration that they wish to legitimatize before the masses at a particular period of their history.

The singular phenomenon of the history of struggle for self-determination in Bangladesh is that the people there have been twice dehistoricized from their immediate economic, social and political attachments within a course of less than thirty years. Along with each instance of such alienation, new symbols of identity, new sense of belonging emerged before the masses. The dualism between the symbol of alienation and the symbol of new belonging (identity) set the stage for social conflict and also to resolve such conflicts before, during and after the political revolution is achieved. We should note that in the case of Bangladesh, as in any other society caught in the wave of nationalism, both the symbols of alienation and identity are heretically conceived and legitimized before its people not by the logic of these symbols, but by the praxis of the *élite* groups. The transformation of the first symbol of identity into a symbol of alienation within a span of thirty years only proves that the praxis of the *élite* groups during the intervening period had failed to legitimatize their ideals before the masses.

In the first instance, religion was used as a symbol to produce a psychological, sociological and political rift, not with the oppressing nation so much as with the communities from which they had separated in 1947. The gain was considerable and perhaps necessary; but the loss was no less significant. The creation of the state of Pakistan dehistoricized its citizens from the attachments of the process of metropolitanization of the economy that was sponsored through colonial administration with the collaboration of the national bourgeoisie, both Hindu and Muslim, in British India over the previous two hundred years. In return, the state of Pakistan was required to set up a new network of metropolitan system over the two segments of the country separated by an insuperable distance. We should also note that the state of Pakistan established the basis for common citizenship of "nationals" who did not necessarily inhabit the same traditional cultural universe. Such attachments to traditional cultural norms could be coherently contained within the new state in many ways. Instead what happened in Pakistan was the suspension of the processes of socialization of the state political apparatus. The monopolistic control of the instruments of government by a linguistic community decomposed the initial heretical content of the symbol of identity and produced incoherence within the format of alliance between the *élite* groups originating from the communities who had continued to retain their identities with their

respective traditional cultures. The emerging new network of metropolitan system of Pakistan with all its relevance to the problem of reconstitution of the diverse civil societies provided the stage for resolving the social conflicts within the polity of Pakistan. But the suspension of the process of socialization of the state political apparatus failed to resolve such conflicts within the format of the instruments of government. Consequently, the urban intelligentsia of East Pakistan rationalized their own attachment with their universe of traditional culture and questioned the validity of the new metropolitan network that was emerging in Pakistan. The entire economic relationship between the two wings of Pakistan was interpreted as comparable to that between a metropolis and the satellite and East Pakistan was accepted as equivalent to a colony of the western wing of the same polity.

Even in more economically advanced countries, we may note, such severe cultural-cum-economic imbalance brings political regionalism in its train. East Pakistan was no exception. What we should note instead is that such regional identity *per se* did not erode the import of the older identity of Islamic nationalism before the masses. This regionalism was merely an external expression of the social conflict that was contained within the very polity of Pakistan. However, due to various circumstances, this regional identity ultimately elevated itself to produce a national identity. The process of such transformation was largely facilitated, on the one hand, by the easily available symbol of language which succeeded in differentiating the oppressors from the oppressed and, on the other, by the tenacious adherence to authoritarianism by the ruling *élites* of the state of Pakistan. The entire process therefore dehistoricized the people of Bangladesh from the previous attachments of religion and projected secularism as a norm for future conduct. Once again we may notice that the new nationalism of Bangladesh is fulfilling its normal heretical role.

We should, however, note that the ideal of secularism did not emerge from the beginning as a basic premise for freedom movement in Bangladesh. On the other hand, the political *élites* were uncertain, or probably unaware, of the necessity of this ideal until the penultimate stage of the political revolution in Bangladesh. In a very basic way, the emergence of this theme of secularism as a political ideal may be explained by the psychosis of the ruling powers. In a very basic way we may say that the atrocities inflicted upon a Muslim community by a Muslim army carried the psychological and sociological rift between the oppressed and the oppressors to such a depth that religion, the basis of their former attachment, emerged as an irrelevant category during such episodes of mass confrontation.

From the circumstance noted above it is possible to formulate two reasonable speculations on the future of social change in Bangladesh.

We have already noticed that the political *élites* while co-ordinating the masses for a political revolution, had failed to estimate the sociological implications of elevating a regional identity into a national one. This phenomenon of leadership lagging behind the masses has been a consistent feature of the entire freedom movement in Bangladesh. Given this relationship between the political *élites* and the masses, we may expect to witness, as a circumstance of social change, the emergence of new political *élites* and new political styles in Bangladesh in the near future. The contour of such styles will not only depend upon the specific value-orientation of these *élite* groups but also upon whether or not the state political apparatus provides a format for collective realization of the need of and strategy for reconstitution of the shattered civil society of Bangladesh.

The second of these speculations is probably needed for conceptualization of the deeper implications of this political revolution in Bangladesh. The elevation of the ideal of secularism as a normative conduct for the citizens of Bangladesh has brought her civil society psychologically closer to the metropolitan system of India. The political involvement of India in the liberation movement of Bangladesh has further enhanced this sense of proximity. But the question is, would such psychological proximity revalidate the concept of the Realm of South Asia as the only logically given geographical unit for the unfoldment of the potentials of her peoples? In whatever way the answer is devised, the patterns of allegiance between the diverse *élite* groups of Bangladesh will certainly revolve round this theme for a considerable time in future.

These two speculations indicate that the future pattern of social change within Bangladesh will be largely determined by two sets of factors—one emerging from the circumstances within the state and the other originating from the external linkages that have been established in the course of the freedom movement, and each over-arching upon the other. But for the present I choose to suspend further elaboration of the above construct and instead attend to the identification of the other integrals of freedom movement within the circumstances of Bangladesh.

We may note that the political *élites* were not first to identify language as a symbol for regional identity. Instead, the urban intelligentsia, or at least a section of it, first realized that language was the most important vehicle for transmission of ideals to the masses. There was nothing revolutionary in such a realization. But ultimately it emerged as a clarion call for political revolution primarily as a reaction against authoritarianism of the ruling powers of the state of Pakistan. We have already observed that the consolidation of the state of Pakistan in 1947 did not eliminate the fact of ethnic diversity or presence of ancient cultural divisions within the polity. Federalism was

the only format of statehood that could overcome the anachronism. Instead, in the sphere of economic development as well as of education, the ruling powers of Pakistan continually projected a unitary state as the valid format of their government. At the same time, the early language movement of East Pakistan was an activity of the urban, western-educated intelligentsia. Where the villager heard of it at all, he was either uninterested or resistant, bound as he was by his loyalties to religion and tradition. Yet this barrier was easily overcome as the violence committed by the state power elevated the intelligentsia to the status of regional martyrs. The violence was inflicted upon the students primarily, who, not belonging to any narrow socio-economic class, but constituting the people from all sections of the society and from all parts of the country, were automatically granted a revolutionary status in the freedom movement in Bangladesh.

Throughout the history of freedom movement in Bangladesh we find the students emerging as the dominant *élites* engaged in pushing the question of self-determination beyond the level of preparedness of the professional political leadership. It was the students in collaboration with an enlightened section of the urban intelligentsia who placed before their people the thesis that the economic relationship between the two wings of Pakistan was that of the metropolis and the satellite and required the professional political leadership to admit the thesis. It was they who consciously realized that federalism was the only format of statehood that could take care of the solidarity of the state of Pakistan and forced the professional political leadership to admit it. Stripped of the arrogance of confrontation that was circumstantially perhaps unavoidable, the Six-Point Programme of the Awami League also envisaged a federal structure of statehood for Pakistan. But once again the violence unleashed by the state-power upset the logic and the students enforced upon the political leaders a call for total sovereignty of Bangladesh.

THREE CONTRADICTIONS

The foregoing analysis brings out three major contradictions of freedom movement of Bangladesh which are likely to produce far-reaching results in the area of social change in this part of the world. *First*, the ideal of federalism had remained a consistent goal for attaining statehood and social change. This format was found necessary not only to produce solidarity over ethnic diversity, but also to overcome the imbalances of economic development. The course of history has made Bangladesh a unitary nation state, while the basic imbalances of her economy have remained unaltered. *Secondly*, the emergence of the unitary nation-state of Bangladesh has been possible not because the political *élites* of East Pakistan had prepared the people for it, but because the ruling powers of Pakistan had acted from an ideological base of negative nationalism by refusing to admit the fallacy of a unitary

form of government. In other words, the people of Bangladesh have been pushed to the status of a unitary nation-state before working out a civil society competent to attain this. *Finally*, the revolutionary leadership, emerging as it did as a reaction to negative nationalism of the ruling powers of Pakistan, rests with the student groups, who, as transient social groups, are required to lead the masses for consolidating the newly-attained political status. No other nation of the world ever faced such an anachronism before. Nevertheless no other nation of the world ever re-acted so spontaneously from native heroism before !

It is clear that the value-orientation of the urban intelligentsia, particularly of the student groups, will largely decide whether or not they will continue to retain their revolutionary role. To retain this they will be required to prepare the masses to face the newly acquired responsibility of a unitary nation-state, to identify the primary components of the vulnerability of their current civil society, and to attain viability in a coherent manner so that economy at the sub-regional, regional and national levels remains integrated. In short, their revolutionary responsibility will be the reconstitution of the shattered civil society of Bangladesh by establishing a self-contained, but new, network of a metropolitan system. But, the transient character of this social group hardly permits any speculation about the possibility of its making any sustained impact in this area of social change.

It is possible that the established political parties will try to absorb sizeable section of these enlightened and revolutionary elements of the society. But the revolutionary images of such parties will again depend upon their style of commitment to the task of reconstitution of the shattered civil society. In this context, the popular belief regarding the inadequacy of the resource endowment of Bangladesh may produce an atrophy and the naive heroism of the masses may become the anathema of state politics of Bangladesh. In such situations, the linkages established by the freedom fighters beyond their geographical boundaries will assume importance.

The historical context of economic under-development requires internationalism and nationalism to develop as complementary rather than as antagonistic creeds in the struggle for self-determination of poorer countries. In such countries, the separate nationalisms find themselves aligned against a common enemy, i.e., the international finance capitalism. "Private" nationalism is a poor weapon against this enemy, for it can be easily turned against equally oppressed brethren of a different nationality. It is true that conscious realization of the need for developing complementarity between internationalism and nationalism is largely confined to the intelligentsia. At the level of the peasant societies, or the masses, chauvinistic nationalism and ethnic prejudices are more normal. This is true of Bangladesh also. Nevertheless, the ideas of the

intelligentsia are crucial since they are to provide the leadership. Quite obviously, the nationalist political *élites* of Bangladesh before the army crackdown of March 1971 were not visibly aware of such needs.

It is also obvious that the political leadership was not prepared organizationally even to face the army crackdown of March 1971. A substantial number of political leaders and members of the urban intelligentsia along with thousands of peasants, unable to bear the atrocities of the Pakistan army, crossed over to India. The border was not sealed.

They found in India not only safety from physical annihilation, but also moral and material support to build up armed resistance against the occupation army in Bangladesh. Even those resistance groups which were subsequently formed entirely within Bangladesh found in Indian territory convenient and consistent refuge against the superior ballistics of Pak army.

India's campaign for organizing international public opinion in support of the claim of sovereignty of Bangladesh emerged as an insuperable political force. And, at the final stage of this freedom movement, ballistic power was placed alongside the Bangladesh freedom fighters to liberate the country from the Pak occupation army. All these events and both passive and active practices brought the peoples of Bangladesh and India closer. It also established before their respective masses the need for co-operation and unity among all communities of South Asia for retaining independence, for overcoming the obstacles of economic underdevelopment, and for maintaining political peace in this part of the world. The required complementarity between internationalism and nationalism has thus been historically vindicated by the praxis of the two societies of India and Bangladesh. Nevertheless, we should mention that neither the political *élites* nor the urban intelligentsia of Bangladesh had demonstrated any awareness about the possibility of emergence of such naive identity beyond the geographical boundaries of their own polity before the penultimate stage of their freedom movement.

This naively-given identity between the two communities will possibly resuscitate the consciousness that was emerging in the realm of South Asia through their sharing of a common fate consequent upon the processes of metropolitanization of British India. At least, the metropolitan network of India may provide the necessary support for the reconstitution of the shattered civil society of Bangladesh. Whether such economic co-operation will produce any demand for economic federalism or will create institutions of state trading is surely a matter of speculation. But the need for such co-operation and also the availability of such supports are beyond any reasonable doubt. Irrespective of whether such naive consciousness regarding the realm of South Asia is manipulated for consolidating the political society or is used for reconstituting the civil society, the process of social change can no longer be contained

within the geographical boundaries of the states of South Asia. This is as much true of Bangladesh as it is of India. It is also true that the future political stability in this part of the world will depend upon whether the derived dichotomy between the required federalism in the economic sphere and the acquired status of unitary nation state in the political sphere is made to project itself as an irreconcilable anachronism or not. Obviously, there are ways to avoid such an anachronism.

For furthering the complementarity between nationalism and internationalism, the intelligentsia of Bangladesh has been given a free-board by the Indian society *per se*. While aligning international opinion, India has taken care to blur any easily identifiable ideological groupings of the international power blocs. A rift between the American and the West European finance capitalism is as much distinct as is the rift between the socialist countries in their adopted postures for or against Bangladesh. At the same time, the military arrogance of the USA has been equally matched by Soviet power in the Indian Ocean area.

Obviously, the Bangladesh intelligentsia has a considerable leeway to make. They have several options open. They may concern themselves more with the socialization of state political apparatus rather than lead a social revolution. But they cannot reasonably establish any apprehension of immediate international intervention if they opt for social revolution through reforms and economic planning in Bangladesh within the acquired identity with the realm of South Asia. The political developments within India will be the only major international constraints that the Bangladesh intelligentsia will face in this task. But, there again, the naive consciousness acquired by the Indian society through the same course of history regarding the realm of South Asia will also play reciprocal roles in shaping political developments within India. Therefore, before concluding this exercise on speculations regarding social change in Bangladesh, we may conveniently turn our eyes to the situation in India.

THE INDIAN CONTEXT

In India, nationalism still retains its dynamic postures, and social revolution has barely begun. Within the institutional format of planning, the gains have been consolidated through bureaucratic processes rather than political processes. The nationalist *élites* and the socialists as contending political groups have shown greater inclination to exploit the objectives of socialization of the state political apparatus rather than to work out any consistent praxis for the reconstitution of the Indian civil society. Instead of fostering any consistent policy for the emergence of modern economic classes within the political economy of the

country, the communists, for example, in their anxiety to attain control over the state political apparatus, have relied much upon arbitrary attributes of classes to project their ideological antagonisms. In their conflicts with nationalism contained as these were within the political society as such, the ideals of social democracy have therefore been repeatedly discovered as the solution for maintaining a balance by both. It is true that ideological antagonisms did emerge in post-independence India out of modern inequality superimposed on ancient cultural divisions contributing to strong regional feelings. It is also true that such antagonisms have been contained always within the format of a federal statehood politically, and through re-allocation of resources by the planning machinery as economic measures. Consequently, the case for strong central government and also for substantial provincial autonomy has emerged in alternating sequence as equally valid formats of statehood before the Indian masses.

The over-view of the Indian political situation given above will clearly indicate that the behaviour of the Indian political *élites* will hardly produce any specific inspiration for the reconstitution of civil society in Bangladesh. Neither would the political *élites* of Bangladesh enjoy similar facilities as their Indian counterparts in projecting any posture of ideological antagonism based upon inter-regional imbalances; for a unitary nation-state can hardly accommodate such regional postures to gain any ground. *E'lite* conflicts within Bangladesh, therefore, will have to be resolved through a somewhat different style. And the style will have to be evolved by the people of Bangladesh themselves, unless, of course, their political *élites* prefer to remain exclusively involved with socialization of the state political apparatus. Set against the psychological proximity that has been produced by the course of freedom movement, such exclusive involvement with the political society may not be quite easy for Bangladesh.

Public control over the planning machinery has strengthened a bureaucratic desire to develop unitary metropolitan economy within India. The price equalization policy of the Government of India is just one of the many external expressions of this desire. This has facilitated monopoly capitalism to retain its control over older, and even vulnerable, locations and to upset regional economic balances through alliances with the regional *élites* of the contending linguistic states of India. Location of industry has been made ubiquitous. In spite of this, the imbalances between the sectoral and regional economic development inherited from the colonial past, together with regional inequality of natural resource endowments, have maintained a multiple-nuclei metropolitan economic system within India. However, the need for integrating these nuclei is naively recognized by the political *élites* of India. Such naive consciousness for an integrated economy may project itself, at least, through the aspirations

of the Indian business classes to look upon the economy of Bangladesh as one additional metropolitan nucleus within the realm of South Asia. Set against the psychological proximity of the two nations, with deficient hegemony of any political group over their respective civil societies, the political *élites* of the two countries will require considerable statecraft to contest such aspirations of the Indian business class ideologically. The consumer preference, the institution of state trading, the terms of trade—all will come within the gamut of such political game. But the choice of the last laugh will rest, of course, with the intelligentsia that commits itself to the civil society by preference !

MAHIUDDIN HAIDER

Bangladesh : Protest and Change

THE BIRTH of Bangladesh as a sovereign state is the first reward in the contemporary history of the struggle for liberation. This achievement and a couple of other significant prizes may be said to have sprung out of the various types of protest orientations. One of them, I think, is the emergence of secularism as the foundation of our state policy. This demand of the people is the search for ways of regulating the varied and often conflicting interests of the different groups. The other is crystallization of new major symbols of personal and national identity.

The immediate and the proclaimed object of the war of liberation was to secure our national independence—our freedom from the paradoxical colonial rule of the minority west wing of a state, more correctly, one of its four territorial divisions—the Panjab. None of the later results, particularly secularism, can be viewed as inferior in import to simple absence of bondage. On the contrary, a proper evaluation would show that it is, in every sense, the most vital root of our freedom. Historically, secularism has been found to hold the key-note to the requisite substance of freedom. Secularism alone makes it worth the price that freedom usually calls for. Incidentally, let this lesson of history convince us that without this secularism the present independence of Bangladesh, though achieved at incalculable cost, might well be as illusory as the one of 1947 under which we languished throughout the following twenty-four years.

The protest against the neo-theocratic drama, staged by Jinnah, brought the necessary changes in the political and economic struggle. The consequence was the recognition of secularism and democracy as state policies of Bangladesh. The people here are no longer to be cast into political groups, called parties, on the absurd basis of their respective religious faiths nor any section of them is thus to be condemned to the permanent status of political minority, resulting, more inevitably than not, in its exclusion, total or partial, from its due share in the

governance of the country. Such groupings there would yet be but always on the free choice of the individuals, theoretically having also the inherent right to be thus formed on communal basis if they so choose, but the state shall neither prescribe the principle of such grouping nor create or encourage the creation of a condition which would compel the citizens to form political parties, on communal basis. Secondly, the parties will now be formed, pledging to advance the common interest of all and never to put that of any section into any kind of jeopardy. If there are parties functioning at cross purposes, as there may be in a regime of class exploitation, they, and each one of them, shall be free from communal bias so as not to discriminate between citizens on the issue of their respective faiths. Members of the state would be equal in their access to political rights. As there is no government-sponsored faith controlling the state machinery, so the question of religious minorities being 'sacred trusts' of the state—'*Jimmis*', as they call it in Islamic terminology—would be irrelevant. Thirdly, in the context of democracy, absolute political sovereignty would vest in the people by whom, therefore, the legal sovereign, whether an individual or a parliament, would be appointed and dismissed and to whom, accordingly, the latter would be exclusively accountable and not to any other authority. That completes the round of restoring religion to its appropriate place—a private affair of the individual, entitled, as of right, to implicit obedience from him and to reign supreme in his spiritual domain subject only to the sovereign authority of the state.

The bare import of secularism in its application to the state—and its true political significance can be appreciated in the background of the state alone—is that the state, as understood in practice is independent of control whatsoever of religion, in every sphere in which the former functions. Freed thus from the superintendence of religion, politics in Bangladesh breathes freely and thus steps towards being what it really is—a systematic and concerted submission of periodical governmental programmes to the people, the political sovereign, with a view to obtaining their consent, express or tacit, to be governed on the basis of such programmes. Evidently, such politics is the soul of democratic government, since, however, democracy conceived as "a government of the people by the people and for the people", requires the safeguard of secularism. For the purpose of providing the basis of such politics, secularism may well be said to be the primary condition of democracy as well.

To say that a theocratic state is despotic is not, however, to mean that a secular state is immune from being so. The latter is equally open to absolutism. In fact, Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy were out and out secular and yet singularly despotic. Nonetheless, there is a material difference on this point between the two types.

Neither the Fuhrer nor the Duce exercised or presumed to wield authority sanctified by divine delegation such as the rulers of any theocracy, whether total or partial, do. In fighting against the former despotism, therefore, the people could not be half as handicapped as they always are in seeking to overthrow the latter. For, the common run of man, particularly the Muslims, generally god-fearing and conditioned to approach with reverence everything sanctioned or appearing to be sanctioned by religion, habitually find it a psychological hurdle to go against any such thing except where they are convinced from experience that its claim to holiness is patently deceitful. Historically, there is no dearth of examples when the divine shield was knavishly exploited to justify roguish misdeeds. A glaring instance of such abuse of religion is furnished by the use to which Islam was put by Pakistan in her vain attempt to undo the liberation struggle of Bangladesh. I am inclined to believe that in projecting and propagating that every 'action' taken in Bangladesh by her hordes was essential to safeguard Islam from the attack of Bengali infidels, she achieved no inconsiderable success in deluding not only public opinion of the then West Pakistan but also a large section of the Muslims elsewhere, though not one of the heaps of heinous crimes committed here during these ten months would be endorsed by any religion worth the name. That Pakistan failed to impress upon the Bengali Muslims in this regard was, again, because her professions militated against their direct experiences. It admits of little denial that since the era of Inquisition, most of the mass brutalities, often genocidal in extent, were perpetrated with impunity either in the name of furthering of some religious cause for safeguarding some racial interests or achieving such other purpose which national scrutiny would find not worth a drop of blood. Again, it is a hard experience of our time how the common people, particularly of the East, throw themselves against the most ameliorative economic system, for instance, socialism, simply because they have been led to believe that it is anti-thetic to their faith. That is what results when the inferior instincts of man—religious, racial, chauvinistic and the rest—can be successfully whipped up to blind his vision. It is, therefore, here—in insuring against the exploitation of such inflammable loyalties of man—that secularism comes to play its most vital part. For, by training the public mind to think, which they must do in exercising or claiming to exercise their inherent sovereignty, and then to judge issues by reasonable standards, it promotes rational thinking and decision, necessary pre-requisites to the ultimate establishment of a democratic set up of the society.

II

The proclaimed policy guidelines of the Government of Bangladesh attest to the comprehensive areas of justice and equity through class barriers. Moreover fundamental as it is, the independence of Bangladesh is pedagogically positive : it has repudiated the classical conception of colonialism by the western countries. That the same colonialism still existed in the nascent history of nationalism of the post War II has been exposed by the newly independent third world country. The latter phenomenon is what the struggle of Bangladesh for independence has contributed to the world history of the late 20th century. Where Biafra failed, Bangladesh succeeded. Indeed the attainment of statehood of Bangladesh has opened up a new era of refutation of colonialism under conditions of emergent nationalism of the post-war world.

It is necessary that the centuries of colonial rule of Bangladesh—Mughal, British and Pakistani periods taken together—be documented. While a complete documentation of the extent of colonial exploitation of Bangladesh by the West Pakistani vested interests during the Pakistani period will be available, an indication of it is handy in the area of imports and exports where Bangladesh was made progressively dependent on West Pakistan.

Table—I

(In crores of rupees)

Year	Exports from former E. Pak.	Imports into former E. Pak.	Total Trade	Balance
1959-60	36.2	56.3	92.5	20.1
1960-61	36.4	81.7	118.1	45.3
1961-62	40.2	85.5	125.7	45.3
1962-63	42.5	86.5	129.0	44.0
1963-64	51.1	89.5	140.6	38.4
1964-65	53.7	87.5	141.2	33.8
1965-66	65.2	120.9	186.1	55.7
1966-67	74.0	132.5	206.5	58.5
1967-68	78.5	123.5	201.8	44.8
1968-69	87.0	138.5	225.5	51.5
July-Dec. 1968	46.4	65.4	111.8	19.0
July-Dec. 1969	51.5	89.5	141.0	38.0

(Source : Government of (former) East Pakistan ;
Economic Survey of E. Pakistan, 1969-70, p 26)

It is evident from Table-I that there had been considerably more imports to than exports from the former East Pakistan from and to West Pakistan over the last decade. In the annual trade between the two former provinces, the former E. Pakistan had always had an unfavourable balance in the interwing trade. This imbalance was a result of the significantly more diversified and higher levels of industrialization in West Pakistan reflected in the importance of manufactured products in the exports to the former East Pakistan. The Planning Department, Government of the former East Pakistan, also held that the breakthrough in agriculture in West Pakistan allowed export of surplus foodgrains to meet the deficit in the former E. Pakistan.

A continuous growth of the economy of West Pakistan, at least during the last decade, allowed for a consolidation of her position in order to enable her to export a substantial surplus to the former E. Pakistan. The negative trade balance for the eastern wing suggested her dependence for imports on West Pakistan. The trend did not seem to change at all in favour of the former.

During Ayub's regime two Five Year Plans of Economic Development were implemented. But East Bengal gained little from these plans. Seventy per cent of the nation's wealth was concentrated in the hands of twenty-two families of West Pakistan. Out of about Rs. 9,000 crores spent during this period, East Bengal's share was less than one-third. Even what was allotted to East Bengal could not be fully spent because of bureaucratic bottlenecks. There were also expenditures outside the Plans in West Pakistan. A new Capital was built in Islamabad at a cost of more than Rs. 1 billion and the expenditure on the Indus Basin Projects exceeded Rs. 10 billion. Moreover, there was an outflow of capital from East Bengal to West Pakistan through the banks owned by the West Pakistanis. No measures were taken to curtail the growth of cartels. Consequently, the industrialists, the bankers and the owners of the insurance companies were the same set of persons. Seventy five per cent of foreign aid was also diverted to West Pakistan. Thus while West Pakistan's economy reached the take-off stage in the late sixties, East Bengal remained poor and underdeveloped. There was not only a wide gap between the per capita incomes of the two wings but East Bengal's per capita income actually fell below what it was in 1947.

Though the people became poorer, a new exploiting class emerged in East Bengal through Basic Democracy and the Works Programme. The resentment of the people against this class and West Pakistan's domination found violent expression in the anti-Ayub movement initiated by the Dacca University students in 1968. Another factor strengthened this movement, and led to the downfall of the Ayub regime. In 1966, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman propounded his six-

point programme and placed it before an all party meeting in Lahore. The plan envisaged economic emancipation and political autonomy for East Bengal. The whole-hearted support of the people for this programme made the West Pakistani ruling *élite* nervous.

After Ayub's departure, General Yahya Khan took the reins of government and imposed martial law on Pakistan for the second time. He promised restoration of full democracy to the country but could never have been genuinely interested in the implementation of this promise. Ultimately, we found that the seeds of Pakistan's destruction were inherent in the socio-economic factors that gave birth to the state of Bangladesh; Yahya Khan's military action was only one of the immediate causes for the liberation movement.

Social unrest and social thought-structure are the two dimensions of the same goal. The one is a result of the other, or rather the one is the expansion of the other.

The colonial exploitation produced liberation movement as well as widespread reform movements in the social structure of Bangladesh. All of them developed a Nationalist-cum-Socialist bias and claimed to purify the current notions gathered round the Bengali race.

III

This approach towards development, from religion to language and ultimately nationalism, took a new pattern with the achievement of free Bangladesh. The administration was committed to the welfare of the people and thereby it had to release new forces to usher in a new era of change.

In the context of our present analysis of social change with reference to Bangladesh, concept of the same has to be defined. In the words of Maclver, social change is a process responsive to many types of changes — changes in the man-made conditions of living, changes in the attitudes and beliefs of man and so forth. In the cogent factors of the changes in our social patterns and trends two elements have played a decisive part. First, western science and technology, and second, social planning by the government. The influence of technology has been perceptible in different areas of social life. To be specific about the areas of change, it involves (i) a demographic revolution, (ii) a decrease in the size, scope and pervasiveness of the family, (iii) emergence of new social classes, (iv) a change in mass-media communication and (v) consequently the emergence of new social problems.

Bangladesh is in transition, due to rapid social change, from traditional to modern society. But because this transition is not complete and because Bangladesh is still pre-industrial, therefore, it is a mixed society,

no longer wholly traditional, nor yet fully modern. Therefore, when economic, political, religious or familiar norms are examined, a conflict is found between traditional and modern mores, neither of which is prominent, and this may be a cause of the hindrance to the solution of various social problems. What tends to happen to a society in transition, borrowing Robert Merton's terminology, is that the members of the society aspire to gain success in life as a goal defined by the mass media, and reinforced by observation as social problems like juvenile delinquency, beggary, prostitution and crime are being created. As for example, the delinquent is the one who does not have equal access to the legitimate means for attaining success (i.e. literacy, family, solidarity, money, education, etc.) and therefore is tempted to use illegitimate (i.e. illegal) means to obtain the goals which a changing society regards as desirable.

It may be evident from the above discussion that a 'Bangladeshi' as a social actor belongs simultaneously to two different social systems. On the one hand, he is a member of a joint family and a traditional society, while on the other, he functions in various roles that are supposed to be free of these twin loyalties. Pertinently, it may be mentioned here that because of the impact of western education and technology, he in fact seems to be non-traditional, competitive and making decisions as a modern free individual. As a result of this process, it may so happen that it could create tension and strain within a personality. After considering the situation in Bangladesh it can be said that though material development is taking place, it may not change our ethics from the traditional to the Western. This is partly because of the fact that our way of life basically reflects glaring differences from Western mode of life and code of ethics. How far this ethics of ours could really stand the test against the western ethics is difficult to say at this stage. It is an interesting setting for the sociologists to observe, study and analyze.

L. P. SINHA

Restructuring Bangladesh

THE EMERGENCE of Bangladesh as an independent, sovereign, nation-state is an event of great significance. It has the possibilities of far-reaching developments which may turn out to be crucial for the future socio-economic-political set up of the Indian subcontinent. Much will depend upon what happens not only in Bangladesh but in India and Pakistan too. Recent events have mercilessly exposed the futility of the principles on which the partition of India took place nearly a quarter of a century ago. The rise of Bangladesh is a repudiation of the idea that religion can serve as the basis of a modern State. This is not the occasion to apportion blame for that tragic consummation but sooner or later, as, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh come together, the situational compulsions will inexorably lead them not only to a political entente but also to an understanding about the socio-economic structural pattern of the subcontinent. In other words, they will have to aim at first in their respective areas, at the creation, not only in form but also in real contents, of a modern, democratic, secular and socialist society free from the exploitation of man by man. When such a society is firmly established, the confederation of the three secular, socialist units may also loom large, at least as an ultimate ideal, for which they may slowly work up to the goal in spite of the hurdles in the way. On the face of it the confederation idea may appear to be no more than a forlorn hope and it may at present scare away people in both Pakistan and Bangladesh but on a closer examination it may turn out to be a feasible proposition for a lasting peace and prosperity in the region. Apart from the geopolitical and strategic considerations which necessitate some sort of unity of outlook, there have been two revealing statements by President Bhutto. Immediately after his visit to Afghanistan a correspondent asked him if he was thinking of a confederation of

Pakistan with Afghanistan. Bhutto averred that if there was to be at all a confederation with any other country, it would be with India, of which Pakistan was a part not long ago ! On taking over as the President of Pakistan, Bhutto maintained that poverty, hunger and exploitation were the main enemies of both India and Pakistan, and that the twenty-five families in Pakistan and the seventy-five families in India were holding to ransom the immense majority of people in both the countries. It is true that Bhutto has not suddenly turned into a socialist but it would be an act of astute statesmanship and foresight to carry the talks with him not only on a political plane but extend it to a socio-economic plane. A lesson repeatedly learnt from the Indian national movement is that attempts at mere political settlements, divorced from socio-economic problems, have been often elusive and, if made, dangerous. Secular State implies not only dissociation of State from religion but, more significantly, concentration upon issues common to the masses of all religions and all communities. It is only on the basis of these issues that a lasting link of friendship and co-operation between the peoples of the three countries can be forged. To be more explicit, it is only on the basis of socialism that the masses of people in the three countries can be weaned away from the religio-communal approach which has been the bane of the subcontinent. Understandably, the task entails immense patience, fortitude and forbearance on the part of all concerned. It involves, above all, a dogged determination to translate into action the theoretical postulations so loudly made.

Bangladesh is now an established fact and the main concern at present is the gigantic and complex task of restructuring it into a reliable, stable, political entity wedded to a truly socialist, democratic, secular society. The first consideration of the country, as of any new-born State, is the question of safety and security. Elements inimical to this new State are not yet reconciled to its existence and they will do all they can, both internally and externally, to create conditions prejudicial to its growth. The significance of the recently concluded Treaty of Friendship, Co-operation and Peace, between Bangladesh and India has to be appreciated in this immediate context. In theory, the Treaty is mutually beneficial to both the parties, but in fact it ultimately places the security of Bangladesh under the protective umbrella of India, and, through her, of the Soviet Union. It is a reliable guarantee against any threat to the new State. Apart from subserving this egoistic end, the Treaty can be seen as a chain in the Soviet concept of a collective system of security for Asia which, apart from converting Asia into an area of untrammelled peace, is seen as part of a fight against imperialism, for it is presumed that the Asian security system will not only engender a sense of peace and security among the Asian nations but will also combat the imperialist threat to the region.

A significantly positive aspect of the Treaty is the declaration by the two governments that they are inspired by the common ideals of peace, secularism, democracy, socialism and nationalism, and their determination to transform their border into a border of eternal peace and friendship. They have also reaffirmed their faith in the basic tenets of non-alignment, peaceful co-existence, mutual co-operation, non-interference in international affairs and respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty. The reference to the ideals of secularism and socialism in a bilateral treaty entered into by two sovereign, independent States is, indeed, remarkable. It derives its sustenance from the Soviet postulation that in developing countries in Asia and Africa, the maintenance of a libertarian atmosphere and national growth and development are possible only in an egalitarian milieu of socialism, secularism and democracy.

Reverting to the security aspect, so far as the Indian subcontinent is concerned, there are still dangers of another war from Pakistan. It may take some time for Pakistan to adjust herself to the reality of Bangladesh and to get over the humiliation of the defeat. No wonder, Bhutto often talks of creating the best fighting forces in Asia and there are even occasional war cries in Pakistan. There is even a fond belief among a section of the Pakistanis that Bangladesh will eventually rise against what they call 'Indian domination' and that they will then go to the help of their 'Muslim brethren' ! As against these designs and possibilities, the Treaty remains a formidable bulwark and will be nursed as such so long as an alternative system of security involving not only Pakistan but China, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. is not devised. If and when this is done, it would be desirable, politically, to accord to Bangladesh the neutral status of Switzerland or Austria, which will be recognized as such by the international community, thus saving funds so necessary for her developmental works. Significantly, in one of his recent speeches Mujib mentioned that he wanted to make Bangladesh 'Switzerland of the East' ; of course in his Calcutta speech Mujib declared that 'no power on earth can destroy the friendship between the two countries'. There is no doubt that with Rahman on the political scene, the bonds of friendship between the two countries will grow and develop, but then a country has to be prepared for all eventualities.

One of the most significant developments in Bangladesh has been a complete break with the past so far as the association of the State with religion is concerned. For a country and a people long fed upon the communal propaganda and religious fanaticism, adoption of secularism as one of the pillars of the State, is undoubtedly a bold and courageous step. But, as our experiences in India show, secularism, to be deep-rooted, has not only to find constitutional recognition as one of the guiding principles of the State, but has to permeate all the institutions from the local level to the highest. Secularism, moreover, is a way of life.

pulsating through the activities of all the citizens in a State. Unfortunately, we in India have not much to offer in this important matter, except by way of theoretical postulations which may not mean much. Thus Bangladesh will, in practice, face a stupendous problem on this score, specially in view of the existence still of the obscurantist ideas and elements. It is to be noted that the average educated man in Bangladesh is deeply religious. Determined as the present leaders of the country are to vigorously project the plank of secularism, they will have to be careful about the curricula from the schools to the University so that a new generation of citizens geared to a secularist and humanist outlook appears on the scene. Needless to say, Bangladesh government will ceaselessly nurse communal harmony, taking firm action against detractors. The Razakars and the Al Badar elements will have to be systematically watched. Inculcation of a secular spirit would be thus difficult and arduous. In this the government and the people of Bangladesh will have to be firmly assured of our own determination to maintain, not only in theory but in actual practice, a genuine atmosphere of secularism and communal harmony in India.

It is heartening to find that the Bangladesh government has declared as its aim the full flowering of the democratic ideas and institutions, without any discrimination on the grounds of caste, creed, sex or religion. As in the course of the tortuous struggle for national freedom, the Universities will continue to play a pivotal role in the free dissemination of ideas. When the University of Dacca reopened on February 8 1972 the students pledged to carry forward the behest of the martyrs: and the President of the Republic declared that henceforth the University would be the seat of free knowledge and free thought, unfettered by any official interference. Thus a big role devolves upon the intelligentsia in the country. It is hoped that, as in the past, they will rise to the occasion.

Having opted for parliamentary democracy, the new Republic will do well to frame a constitution which can be a fit instrument for giving expression to the urges and aspirations of the people. In this respect our experiences in India should be a lesson. It appears that the people in Bangladesh would be set much more firmly, than even we in India, to the establishment of a socialist economy. It will, therefore, need a constitution unencumbered by unnecessary restrictions, legal or political. The constitutional impediments to social progress that have recently been faced in India and the subsequent attempts to remove them, should teach the Bangladesh authorities a lesson. As in India, they, too, have in Bangladesh elements on the extreme left, the extreme right and the centre. The all-pervasive Awami League, basking in the sunshine of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's charismatic popularity will find it easy to frame a constitution by the Constituent Assembly whose members

belong almost exclusively to the League. The demands for fresh elections for the Constituent Assembly made by Muzaffar Ahmad of the National Awami Party were turned down by the government on practical grounds. The already existing five party Consultative Committee of radical forces forged during the war of national liberation will be used as a forum for free and frank discussion on all issues involved. Probably this has not satisfied some elements. Maulana Bhasani has urged all-round reforms and has even threatened that there will be a stir if a truly people's constitution, embodying the urges and aspirations of the people, is not framed speedily. However, despite these outbursts, constitution-making will not be a difficult task.

In line with the proclaimed policies of a number of newly independent countries in Asia and Africa, the democratic republic of Bangladesh has set before it the goal of socialism, the outlines of which are still to be unfolded but which will be of a non-doctrinaire, pragmatic variety. It will be remembered that though in the prepartition days East Bengal had a tradition of peasant and revolutionary activities, yet the socialist movement remained extremely weak in what was then East Pakistan. In an atmosphere in which even basic liberties were not available to the people, the struggle for socialism could not make any headway. There were, in name, socialist and communist parties but they were mostly paper organizations. The rumblings of socialistic slogans could be heard at the time of the United Front politics in 1954 when Maulana Bhasani talked of establishing an Islamic Socialism but these were soon drowned by Ayub's dictates. During 1968-69 the popular mass upsurge in East Pakistan was based upon the eleven-point programme put forth by the Students' Action Committee composed of all progressive and democratic students and supported by the Awami League. Although there was no mention of socialism, yet it contained the demands for a neutral and independent foreign policy, scrapping of military pacts, nationalization of banks, insurance and other big industries, living wages for workers, reduction of rents and taxes, educational reforms, full civil liberties. The Proclamation of Independence Order (10. 4. '71) also did not speak of socialism but referred to the principles of equality, human dignity and social justice.

Thus, in the absence of a strong historical tradition of socialism, the government will have to march with determination to push forward socialistic measures. Mujib has repeatedly asserted that the people in Bangladesh want to establish a just society free from exploitation; soon after his return to Bangladesh after months of incarceration Mujib asserted that Bangladesh would have a socialistic pattern of economy established through democratic processes.

Objective conditions in Bangladesh call for energetic steps in the direction of socialism and against the establishment of a capitalist

democracy. The economy is backward. The economic disparities are even more glaring than in India or Pakistan. While the industrial workers would hardly number two lakhs, there is no entrenched class of native bourgeoisie either. The people at present are strongly in favour of a socialistic pattern of society.

The government have embarked upon the policy of developing large-scale industries in the public sector. A decision has already been taken to nationalize banks, insurance companies and jute, textile and sugar mills. Foreign banks and insurance companies have been excluded. While making these announcements the Prime Minister said that a major portion of the foreign trade would be nationalized to begin with, but it would be taken over completely in course of time. He also said that 10 corporations had been set up to run nationalized industries and each one of them would have representatives of workers and the government in it. Bangladesh urgently needs enactments for land ceiling and land reforms. The task of agrarian reforms is as complex in Bangladesh as it is in India, but it is hoped that the government would take bold and energetic steps in this direction.

If the government of Bangladesh is thus pledged to the establishment of a socialist economy, it is incumbent upon us in India to channelize all our trade and economic assistance to Bangladesh through State agencies and government establishments and corporations. This is necessary not only in the interest of a socialistic economy but also for the fact that there have already been loud voices in Bangladesh regarding smuggling and other 'black' practices by traders, both Indian and Bengali. We have to exhibit the same steadfastness and determination in helping Bangladesh establish a secular, socialist, democratic society, as we did during their struggle for national emancipation.

S. K. MUKHERJEE

Bangladesh and War Crimes Trial

BANGLADESH, born the other day, has come to stay : it has established its vitality : it is a reality now. The story behind its birth is known to all. Bangladesh was born out of bloodbath in which millions lost their lives. The birth of Bangladesh is significant from various points of view. It negates the two-nation theory based on religion propagated by the traditional Muslim communalists : it shows that religion cannot by itself be a unifying bond when geographical location, language, culture, economy, political aspirations are different. The birth of Bangladesh again proves that every state for its continuity and stability must administer the different regions with reference to value and welfare considerations. Validity of the administration can stand on solid legitimacy when it is ultimately value-based. That means again that a regime can be sustained for some time only by appeal to sentimental legitimacy but to be stable it must be based on operational legitimacy. Sentimental legitimacy can never be a substitute for operational legitimacy : that means the validity of a regime to the people will disappear if it stands divorced from value for long. The people of Bangladesh were united with and were within Pakistan for all these years as they believed that Pakistan would actually be value-based in its policy action towards Bangladesh (former East Pakistan). But the continued economic exploitation of East Pakistan by the ruling regime which belonged to West Pakistan, cultural domination by the West wing over the East wing, political hegemony — all these things revealed to the people of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) that Pakistan for them had lost operational legitimacy, i.e., the value-base : sentimental legitimacy plea failed to be effective for long. They, the people of Bangladesh, discovered their identity : they wanted to reassert the same. The result was revolt. The reaction among the rulers was the policy of ruthless repression. Military

crackdown was ordered on the unarmed people of Bangladesh. Millions lost their lives but the fire that was kindled could not be put out by bullets and bayonets of the oppressors. Bangladesh, as a new independent sovereign Republic, was born with the message of Secularism, Democracy, Nationalism and Socialism.

Bangladesh is a reality now —it has been recognized by 87 states of the world. India recognized Bangladesh on 6 December 1971 stating that the so-called mother state of Pakistan "is totally incapable of bringing the people of Bangladesh back under its control." By April 1972 more than 60 states including the four permanent members of the Security Council had recognized Bangladesh. By August 1972 the number of states recognizing Bangladesh had gone up to about 87.

A question may be raised whether Bangladesh should seek U.N. membership or Bangladesh can inherit the original Pakistan membership of the U.N. automatically and West Pakistan should seek fresh U.N. membership. There was after India's partition a controversy regarding continuity of international personality. It was ultimately decided that India would succeed to the U.N. membership of original undivided India and Pakistan was admitted afresh under Article 4 of the Charter. Thereafter the Sixth Committee on a reference by the First Committee of the General Assembly indicated for future rule that "when a new state is created, whatever may be the territory and the population which it comprises and whether or not they form part of a state member of the United Nations, it cannot under the system of the Charter claim the status of the Member of the United Nations unless it has been formally admitted as such in conformity with the provisions of the Charter."² Hence a new state, however created, has to seek U.N. membership. Still it may be considered whether Bangladesh by invoking the democratic principle of majority may not lay a claim to inheritance of Pakistan's original U.N. membership and Pakistan with the new name of West Pakistan should not apply for fresh admission. Though the issue today is closed with China's veto on Bangladesh's admission to the U.N. membership yet the whole matter may be reopened by taking a stand on democratic principle of majority claim. But that is a different issue the details of which are not relevant in the present context.

As soon as Bangladesh emerged as an independent Republic after the nightmarish bloodbath and the Pakistani soldiers surrendered to joint India-Bangladesh military command on 16 December 1971 and Bangladesh administration was established, demand arose from different quarters in Bangladesh, and perhaps rightly, for the trial of the war-criminals. As days passed by, their demand became more and more insistent. The Acting President of Bangladesh on 23 December 1971 said for the first time while talking to a group of journalists at Dacca that his Government would demand from India that the army officials respon-

sible for genocide in Bangladesh should be handed over to it for trial as war criminals. The Bangladesh Home Minister said on 25 December 1971 at Dacca that Dr. A. M. Malik, Governor of former East Pakistan, and his Cabinet Ministers would be tried by a Special Tribunal set up by the Bangladesh Government as criminals responsible for the genocide in the country. Mujibur Rahman after becoming Prime Minister of Bangladesh said on 12 January 1972 that he would raise the issue of genocide with the U.N. and struggle for an International Tribunal in the Nuremberg pattern to try "the culprits who committed crimes against my people." Mujib again in an interview to David Frost on British Television on 17 January 1972 called for an open trial of Yahya Khan—"the Killer of 3 millions in Bangladesh"; he also said that "the West Pakistani troops were worse than animals", "the onslaught was the greatest massacre of a people in history", and "in the carnage 25,000 to 30,000 houses were burnt and looted." He demanded that the U.N. should try West Pak leaders in the way in which "the German fascist war criminals were tried". He further said : "I believe in the policy of forget and forgive but who can forget and forgive that this was genocide of my people." "I believe in forget and forgive but this is an impossible part of forget and forgive." The intellectuals of Bangladesh launched a mass signature campaign demanding the trial of Niaji and Farman Ali and people came in hundreds and thousands to put their signature.³ A Bangladesh Government spokesman said on 22 February 1972 that the Government had prepared a list of more than 500 war criminals and against each of them specific charges had been framed. Two categories of Tribunals would shortly be set up, one exclusively for the trial of top army officials responsible for planning the genocide and the other for lower ranks who executed the order. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh said at Dacca on 7 March 1972 that Tikka Khan would be tried as war criminal No. 1. Some Muslims in India had even the feeling that the sufferings of the people of Bangladesh were similar in certain respects to those of the immortal heroes of Karbala. In any case the fact is that the demand for the trial of the war criminals in Bangladesh is growing more and more insistent. If there be no trial there may emerge a strong resentment among the people there and this may even put the Mujib regime in peril.

India also feels and has told the United Nations that persons committing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity were not, in its view, entitled to any immunity under the Genocide Convention of 1948. Dr. Max Bebler, noted Yugoslav jurist, is reported to have said at Dacca at a Press Conference on 8 March 1972 that Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state had 'every right' to put 'war criminals' on trial by a national tribunal. Bangladesh, India and even some

foreign jurists then feel that Bangladesh has full right in law to hold the trial.

A Pakistani Government spokesman, however, said in Rawalpindi on 30 December 1971 that any move to put Pakistani prisoners of war and civilian officials on trial or to hand them over to Bangladesh Government "would be in defiance of the Geneva Conventions and the United Nations Security Council Resolution." Bhutto is reported to have said in this connexion that the trial of the Pakistani prisoners of war as war criminals would mean a "point of no return".

In the context of these divergences of opinion it is necessary first to see what the position of international law on the point is before we pass our own judgment.

Initially we must point out that war crimes trial and repatriation of prisoners of war are two distinct and separate issues and these must not be confused. Article 118 of the Geneva Convention of 1949 on the Treatment of Prisoners of war lays down that "Prisoners of war shall be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities."⁴ Article 75 of the Geneva Convention of 1929 regarding the Treatment of Prisoners of War laid down: "In any case the repatriation of prisoners shall be effected as soon as possible after the conclusion of peace."⁵ This idea was there in the Hague Rules also. Article 20 of the Fourth Hague Convention of 1907 enacts: "After the conclusion of peace, the repatriation of prisoners of war shall be carried out as quickly as possible."⁶ Article 20 of the Second Hague Convention of 1899 contained virtually the same thing when it laid down: "After the conclusion of peace, the repatriation of prisoners of war shall take place as speedily as possible."⁷

It will be noted that the 1949 Convention on the issue makes a change in the drafting of the law on the point. Instead of 'as soon as possible', 'as quickly as possible', and 'as speedily as possible' in the earlier rules, the 1949 Convention contains the phrase 'without delay'. And instead of 'after the conclusion of peace' in all the three earlier documents, the 1949 Convention contains the phrase 'after the cessation of active hostilities'. These two differences in drafting in the 1949 Convention were made in the light of the experiences gained during the second world war. The phrases 'as soon as possible', 'as quickly as possible', and 'as speedily as possible' left almost everything to the discretion of the detaining Power: the phrase 'without delay' in the 1949 Convention is intended to eliminate that element of arbitrary discretion (though complication regarding the interpretation of the phrase may emerge). The phrase 'after the conclusion of peace' in all the earlier legal documents meant that the repatriation duty would emerge only after the end of war in the legal sense, i.e., after the official termination of war through a Treaty of Peace. But there might be a long period

intervening between the general armistice, i.e., end of war in the material sense and the conclusion of peace, i.e., end of war in the legal sense. In the earlier laws the prisoners of war could be detained lawfully during this period and no obligation to repatriate the prisoners would accrue. But under the Convention of 1949 the obligation to repatriate the prisoners of war on the part of the Detaining Power would emerge 'after the cessation of active hostilities', i.e., after the end of war in the material sense and that again 'without delay'. If this be the law on the point, may it not be argued that India and Bangladesh to whose joint military command the Pakistani prisoners of war surrendered ought to have repatriated the Pakistani prisoners of war by now? Active hostilities between India-Bangladesh and Pakistan had been over in December 1971. The Pakistani prisoners of war are still under detention. May not India and Bangladesh be declared guilty of violating this part of the law? Our answer is definitely in the negative.

The Detaining Power has the obligation to release and repatriate the prisoners of war 'without delay'. What is the exact meaning of this phrase 'without delay'? 'Without delay' can never mean 'at once' or 'immediately'. It can only mean 'without undue delay' or 'without unnecessary delay'. The purpose of captivity is to "*prevent prisoners from returning to their corps and taking up arms again.*"⁸ Moreover after 'the cessation of active hostilities' means a general armistice acting as a prelude to peace in which the defeated state has no chance to resume hostilities in any near future. If then the bellicosity of the defeated party is still there, immediate repatriation of their prisoners of war by the temporary victor will mean a further encouragement to the temporarily vanquished party and these repatriated prisoners of war would take up arms again against the releasing state. Hence the *intention of this Article was that when there was total surrender, when there was no possibility of the resumption of hostilities by the defeated party in any immediately foreseeable future, when Peace Treaty would take a long time but armistice was a prelude to peace, the prisoners of war should be released and repatriated without delay.* If, however, the delay is due to these factors being absent, i.e., due to the fact that these conditions are not there then the delay is justified. All reports indicate that Pakistan's bellicosity is still there. Bhutto is unpredicable. The U.S.A. and China are helping Pakistan with arms. Pakistan is reported to have raised and to be raising new battalions. In such a context the spirit of Article 118 of the Prisoners of War Convention 1949 justifies that the Pakistani prisoners of war detained by India-Bangladesh should not be released and repatriated; their detention should continue. Hence India and Bangladesh are surely not guilty of any breach of International Law for not releasing the Pakistani prisoners of war so long.

But can there be a trial of the prisoners who were guilty of war

crimes or of genocide in Bangladesh? We feel that India-Bangladesh have a right under the law to hold the trial and that the trial should be held. Let us see what the position of International Law is regarding the trial of war crimes and criminals.

Punishment of war crimes committed by enemy soldiers and other enemy subjects is one of the several means recognized by International Law for securing legitimate warfare and falls within the category named 'measures of self-help'.⁹ In other words punishment of war crimes is one of the 'self-help' measures sanctioned by International Law for compelling the enemy to comply with the laws of warfare and thus for securing legitimate warfare. "War crimes are such hostile or other acts of soldiers or other individuals as may be punished by the enemy on capture of the offender."¹⁰ This is the definition of war crimes. This definition "makes it clear that a belligerent may punish captured enemy soldiers who before capture committed violation of the rules of warfare which constituted war crimes." The belligerents then have a right to punish war crimes and persons guilty of war crimes. In fact, "the trial of real or alleged war criminals may be traced back to the dawn of modern International Law." We hear of some such trial since 1268. But later it became customary to insert in the Treaty of Peace an amnesty clause granting immunity to all guilty of wrongful acts. Even in the absence of the Treaty of Peace, amnesty was believed to be one of the legal effects of the end of war. This custom continued till the First World War. The Treaty of Versailles which ended the First World War, however, became an exception as it inserted the 'war guilt' clause and it provided for the trial and punishment of the German Kaiser and other individual members of the armed forces of Germany. The trial could not be held on account of various reasons but it established the principle that persons guilty of offences against the laws of war could be brought to trial at the end of the war. The Nuremberg Trial was an extension of this principle.

Hence trial of war crimes and captured war criminals by the victor is today "a well-recognized principle of International Law."¹¹ Even the victorious belligerent can impose upon the defeated state "the duty, as one of the provisions of the armistice or of the Peace Treaty, to surrender for trial persons accused of war crimes." India and Bangladesh were victors in the war of 1971. The Pakistani soldiers in Bangladesh surrendered to the joint India-Bangladesh command. Hence as victors under International Law, they surely have a right to try the war criminals and to punish them. After the Second World War in pursuance of the Moscow Declaration of October 30 1943 and of similar pronouncements, the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg was set up. This International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg tried those accused persons whose crimes had no specific 'geographical location'. In addi-

tion, the national authorities of the various Allied States held the trial of many members of former enemy armed forces and civilians on charges of war crimes. The principle, then, of trial of war criminals and war crimes is today firmly and solidly established within the law of nations. The principle, today, is so widely acknowledged that "in 1950 the International Law Commission affirmed that it is possible — in addition to being desirable — to establish an international judicial organ for the trial of persons charged with genocide or other crimes over which jurisdiction will be conferred upon the organ by treaties."¹²

Hence theory, practice and juristic opinion unite in establishing that the belligerents have a right to try and punish the captured enemy soldiers guilty of war crimes. Hence legality of the trial of war criminals either by India or particularly by Bangladesh cannot be questioned. Pakistan may argue that the war crimes, if committed at all, were committed in Bangladesh proper, not in India, and Pakistani soldiers surrendered to the Indian military commander. Hence there cannot be trial of the Pakistani war criminals by Bangladesh as the Pakistani soldiers surrendered to the Indian military commander, not to the Bangladesh army. And there cannot be a trial of the Pakistani war criminals by India as the war crimes, if any, had specific geographical location, viz., Bangladesh and were not committed against India or in Indian territory in any form. The answer is that the Pakistani soldiers in Bangladesh surrendered to the joint India-Bangladesh command and not to the Indian Commander only. Hence there may lawfully be trial of the Pakistani war criminals both by India and Bangladesh jointly or separately and this action cannot be questioned from the legal point of view.

Regarding the legality of the Nuremberg Trial questions were raised. These related to the jurisdiction, the doctrine of respondent superior, the *ex post facto* principle, and the international character of the Tribunal. All these were met by equally valid counter-arguments. Hence, in the event of a trial of the Pakistani war criminals by Bangladesh through Nuremberg pattern Tribunal, the challenge to legality, if raised, can be met by similar counter-arguments. The ethical argument against Nuremberg Trial was the 'clean hands doctrine'. That is not applicable in this case at all as neither India nor Bangladesh was ever guilty of the unclean game, tactics or crimes which Pakistan indulged in and committed. The political argument against Nuremberg Trial was that it would make reconciliation difficult. That argument also is irrelevant here as Bangladesh does not want reconciliation with Islamabad on the condition that it would not hold the trial of the Pakistani war criminals. Hence legally, the trial can be held; ethically, the case for the right of trial is much stronger than what it was in the Nuremberg case; politically, the trial would not create any complication of serious nature as non-reconciliation between Bangladesh

and Pakistan (if that results from the trial) would not damage the fabric of peace in the zone (rather non-reconciliation may help the cause of peace in a more effective way). Hence the trial can be held and that would not involve any violation of international law.

I feel, moreover, that the trial should be held for other reasons as well. Pakistan, it may be mentioned, violated in Bangladesh war most of the important rules of international law. Pakistan violated (1) the doctrine of immunity of non-combatants from belligerent attack; (2) Article 23(g) of the Hague Convention II of 1899 and Hague Convention IV of 1907; (3) all the provisions of U.N. Charter regarding human rights, viz., Preamble, Article 1 (2) and (3), Article 55 (c), Article 56, Article 66 (2) and Article 76 (c); (4) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948; (5) International Covenants on Human Rights 1966; (6) Genocide Convention 1948; and (7) Article 3 of the Geneva Convention of 1949, and thereby (8) have committed crimes against humanity. Many of these violations would come within the category of war crimes.

These are serious offences against the laws of nations. If these crimes go unpunished, the laws of war would be treated as simply paper formulas. The trial is necessary to ensure that the laws of war are not a mockery and a myth: they have a rod behind them. Secondly, trial of the war criminals would mean punishment of the law-breakers. Every punishment has three aspects of which the preventive or the deterrent aspect is the most important. If the trial can have deterrent effect then it will strengthen the basis of international law as a jural order. Thirdly, the trial and punishment will lend a jural basis to the international legal system and will strengthen the precedent created at Nuremberg and Tokyo.

Apart from these factors, I have a feeling that Pakistan is guilty of a serious offence in not acting according to the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 regarding penal sanctions for 'grave breaches' of the Convention. In other words, it can be shown that Pakistan itself had a duty to punish those members of Pakistani armed forces and commanders who were guilty of 'grave breaches' of the Geneva Conventions. That the Geneva Conventions of 1949 were violated by Pakistan in various aspects nobody would question today. All the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 lay down (Articles 49, 50 and 52 of the Conventions I and II; Articles 129, 130 and 132 of the Convention III; Articles 146, 147 and 149 of the Convention IV) that there should be penal sanction for 'grave breaches of the Convention.' "The High Contracting Parties undertake to enact any legislation necessary to provide effective penal sanctions for persons committing, or ordering to be committed, any of the grave breaches of the present Convention defined in the following Article". "Each High Contracting Party shall be under the obligation

to search for persons alleged to have committed, or to have ordered to be committed, such grave breaches, and shall bring such persons, *regardless of their nationality*, before its own Courts". "It may also, if it prefers, and in accordance with the provision of its own legislation, hand such persons over for trial to another High Contracting Party concerned, provided such High Contracting Party has made out a *prima facie* case." These are more or less identical in all the four Conventions. The Conventions do not use the term 'war crimes' but use the phrase 'grave breaches'. 'Grave breaches' have not been defined but enumerated in the four Conventions more or less in the same manner with some differences. The 'grave breaches' are "wilful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, and extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly (Conventions I and II). In the Third Geneva Convention regarding the Treatment of the Prisoners of War there are some other items in place of the last item in the above list; so also in the Fourth Geneva Convention regarding the Treatment of the Civilians in time of war. It is known to all that most of these excesses and 'grave breaches' were committed by the Pakistani soldiers in Bangladesh.

"The Convention has avoided the use of the term 'war crimes' in relation to the grave breaches of the Convention. However, there is no doubt that they constitute war crimes."¹² Hence Pakistani soldiers in Bangladesh committed 'grave breaches' or war crimes; and the persons who ordered such 'grave breaches' to be committed were equally guilty. Pakistan is a signatory and party to the Geneva Convention. Pakistan has a legal obligation (the term being 'undertake') to enact legislation necessary to provide effective penal sanction for them. It has also the legal duty (the term being 'shall be under the obligation') to search for these persons and bring them before their own Courts for trial. It will be noted then that the Conventions "do not attempt to provide for the trial of 'grave breaches' by an International Tribunal (as is the case in war crimes), but contemplate only trial and sentence by the regularly constituted courts of the parties to the conflict." Each state, which is a party to the Convention will then have to make necessary changes in its laws, if necessary, to enable its criminal courts to have jurisdiction over and to punish 'grave breaches' listed in the Convention, "no matter where and by whom they are committed." The phrase 'regardless of their nationality' would mean all persons guilty of 'grave breaches' including even the nationals or soldiers of the Contracting Party itself. Hence Pakistan has an obligation under the Geneva Conventions to punish even its own soldiers if and when they are found guilty of 'grave breaches'. India and Bangladesh surely have the right to capture, detain

and hold the trial of the Pakistani soldiers who are guilty of 'grave breaches' of the Convention. Hence Pakistan is doubly guilty in the matter — Pakistani army men have committed 'grave breaches' and Pakistani army superiors have ordered these 'grave breaches' to be committed, and secondly, Pakistan has failed to declare that these persons, if they flee to Pakistan, would be captured and produced before its own courts for trial. Hence any challenge by Pakistan against the legal right of India and Bangladesh to hold the trial of the war criminals would appear in this context to be baseless, frivolous and even ridiculous. Only as late as September 1972 in an interview to the Editor of the *Blitz*, Bhutto is reported to have said: "I do not want to condone atrocities; and if there were cases of excesses or crimes we are prepared to try them by court martial ... I assure you that we will punish those proved guilty."¹⁴ Bhutto ultimately sees reason but he is an unpredictable man and the 'if' in the statement leaves a dangerous loophole in the entire approach. Nevertheless the trial is assured, perhaps as a part of duty under law. Thus the right of trial on the part of India or Bangladesh stands and cannot be challenged. Moreover, India has a right under law to hand over those prisoners who are guilty of war crimes to Bangladesh for trial (the language in law being 'may hand over') and that cannot be questioned by Pakistan. Hence India and Bangladesh have the right in law to hold the trial and I feel that the trial should be held for lending sanctity to the international jural order.

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AJIT KUMAR SHARMA

Bangladesh and Power Blocs

I

THE CONFRONTATION with each other, of the two established super powers, in the Indian subcontinent, and of both of them with the developing third one, provides the dynamic background to any discussion on Bangladesh in relation to international politics. The yet unsettled question of India's destiny is also another vital aspect of the same setting.

Immediately before the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state in the context of an artificial political structure of a subcontinent divided into two mutually hostile neighbours, the three big powers, the USA, the USSR and China, were carefully formulating and firmly pursuing their policies for maintaining a balance of power to meet the needs of the rivalry amongst them. While the Atlantic camp represented by America had successfully managed to promote its economic interests by sustaining a good deal of influence over both New Delhi and Islamabad, the Soviet and the Chinese camps competed with each other through their respective holds in India and Pakistan. Their respective strategies were determined from time to time by their basic political, economic and ideological goals as well as by the character of mutual relationship between any two of them obtaining during any particular length of time. The pre-1971 big-power equation was marked by constant rivalries, alternate friendships and the acceptance of the *status quo* in the subcontinent. In course of the three powers' continuous cold war waged inside the Indian subcontinent it was noticed that in tune with the demands of their strictly national interests, at times Russia stood closer to China as against America, at other times America and Russia had become friends to stand unitedly against China, and again there were periods when America and China were found to line up in the same platform to resist Russia. But significantly enough, these

variables did not at all alter one constant factor. In other words, there was no change in their attitude towards the maintenance of *status quo* in the subcontinent, which simply meant that they were in favour of continuing an artificial structure generating mutual hostilities between India and Pakistan. The only difference among them on this account was that whereas America and Russia sought to strengthen the existing set-up through methods of friendly postures to both the hostile brothers, China attempted to do the same by instigating Pakistan against India. Since a friendly India was needed by Soviet Russia as an instrument of her resistance to China, an agreeable Pakistan was necessary for America as an anti-China ally, and a friendly Pakistan was considered by China to be a suitable foothold against India, the subcontinental structure remained throughout a matter of big power equation.

II

East Bengal's revolt against the parent state of Pakistan at once appeared on the horizon as a serious pointer to a fundamental alteration in the subcontinental political and economic structure. Obviously, none of the three powers could calmly welcome such an eventuality. In point of fact, this big event was a great shock for all of them, because all their calculations made so far were wholly upset by the Awami League.

That each of the three powers was to support the continued existence of an integrated Pakistan as against its possible break-up through the movement for an independent Bangladesh had been amply clear from the very beginning. In a conference of Pakistani ambassadors held at Geneva on 24th and 25th August 1971, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary had reported to the effect that (i) the Soviet Prime Minister promised Russia's continued desire to help Pakistan, (ii) President Nixon had also agreed to fully maintain economic aid and other aids to Pakistan and (iii) China was interested in maintaining the integrity and strength of Pakistan.

In course of the liberation struggle in East Bengal, however, while both the USA and China chose to remain openly on the side of Pakistan, Soviet Russia followed a tactical move in favour of Bangladesh and India without of course wholly antagonizing Pakistan. But behind the apparently similar attitude of America and China there was a qualitative difference between their approaches to Bangladesh. In economic terms the USA could hardly lose India or Pakistan. At the same time she was frustrated over the successful machinations of her Soviet rival in India. Hence her diplomatic support to Pakistan and disapproval of Bangladesh. The Chinese line of action, on the other hand, was dictated by what is called her revolutionary ethics. She regarded the

Bangladesh movement as counter-revolutionary because of the interventions of India and Soviet Russia. Therefore, she was anti-Bangladesh and pro-Pakistan. In such a situation it was left to Soviet Russia to take full advantage of the Bangladesh struggle which held out prospects for the parliamentary road to revolutionary changes of her approved pattern. The long-term dilemma of the Government of India in regard to recognition of Bangladesh provided the golden opportunity to the Kremlin to take the initiative for a more positive commitment in the Bangladesh issue.

The Indo-Soviet Treaty of peace, friendship and co-operation between the two countries signed by India under duress of Bangladesh emergency, preceded by yet another dramatic event in the shape of President Nixon's announcement of his proposed visit to China, brought about an instant radical change in the whole situation. As a logical outcome of it, when Pakistan declared war against India and the Indian army marched to join the Bangladesh Mukti Bahini, the USA and China further consolidated their unity as against the combination of Russia, India and Bangladesh. In the UN Security Council as well as in its General Assembly, this confrontation of the big powers was exhibited through mutually aggressive postures. Had the Indo-Pak war not been dramatically concluded by the total surrender of the Pakistani army in Bangladesh, it is difficult to say what turn the power bloc conflict would have taken. The end of the war, however, left the Russians with an edge over her two other rivals in the subcontinent.

III

In the matter of recognition of Bangladesh it is necessary to point out that when the issue had at first come before India, the Government of India had practically surrendered its initiative to the super powers. It hesitated to accord recognition to the Mujibnagar regime unless one of the super powers was ready to go with it. It was Soviet Russia which ultimately came to India's help, although the formal Russian recognition of Bangladesh was announced 49 days after that of India. President Nixon took three months to admit the reality of a divided Pakistan and to accord recognition to the emerging state. China has yet to reconcile her strategy to the new state of Sovereign Bangladesh.

As at present, while Soviet Russia is closest to Bangladesh, the USA is also not too far. In continuation of her earlier initiative to assist the liberation struggle, the Kremlin invited Prime Minister Mujibur Rahman to Moscow in the first week of last March. In a joint communique issued from Moscow, Prime Ministers Kosygin and Mujib declared that both countries were in complete understanding on all matters of mutual interest and international issues. Equally signifi-

cant is the fact that just two weeks later, President Bhutto too received a hearty welcome in the Russian capital. But the Soviet Prime Minister obliged his guest by advising him to initiate talks with India and to abandon the policy of confrontation.

It transpires that despite their openly announced and mutually hostile stands, the Kremlin and the White House had a substantial amount of mutual understanding in the matter of Bangladesh. As far back as December 1971, during the Nixon-Heath summit meeting at Bermuda, the US President had taken credit for diplomatic success in bringing pressure to bear upon India through Russia for a ceasefire in the war over Bangladesh. In the same month the US Secretary of State Rogers had also stated that the question of diplomatic recognition to Bangladesh would be conditional on good behaviour. Cryptically he added that the US favoured as a principle neither integration nor secession, but favoured settlement of international disputes by peaceful means. Later in February 1972, President Nixon, announcing that he was not anti-India but anti-war, stated thus: "At this point we are going to do everything we can to develop a new relationship with countries on the subcontinent that will be pro-Indian, pro-Bengalis, pro-Pakistan but mostly pro-peace." All such American statements were fraught with double meaning. So was the case with the USSR.

While the behaviour of the Kremlin and the White House is an indication of their indirect satisfaction with the state of affairs in Bangladesh, it is yet not clear as to how the two big powers will try to utilize Bhutto and his Pakistan *vis-a-vis* Bangladesh and India. As far as China is concerned she continues to maintain a calculated silence in the current triangular setting of power relations. Depending on the general orientation of the Bangladesh Government the Chinese may choose to support anti-Awami League groups. The Chinese are already very much intrigued by the Indo-Soviet Treaty which they consider to be a virtual 20-year pact aimed against them. In the not very unlikely event of a similar Russian agreement with Bangladesh in future, the Chinese may regard it as a challenge from a Russian system of Asian Collective Security against China. Considered from that point of view, China is likely to be positively hostile to Bangladesh.

IV

Years ago, in 1950, two of our national leaders happened to make two significant hints in this respect which stand out even today as relevant pointers. Prime Minister Nehru, in a letter to Sir B. N. Rao, wrote: "I have a strong feeling that future of Asia is tied up with the relations between India and China. I see that both the USA and the UK

on the one hand, and the USSR on the other, for entirely different reasons, are not anxious that India and China should be friendly towards each other. That itself is a significant fact which has to be borne in mind." In the same year, Dr. Rammonohar Lohia, writing on the historical destiny of the then East Pakistan, had prophetically stated : "East Pakistan must either become the colony of West Pakistan or continually loosen its present relationship in favour of that with the neighbouring areas of India. And the likelier outcome is towards independence rather than colonization of East Pakistan."

Since normal and natural relationship among the countries of South Asia has so far been prevented by the existing artificial relationship between India and Pakistan, and since India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, as inseparable parts of a single subcontinent, cannot fulfil their common destiny without releasing themselves from the foreign policy moorings of the Atlantic and Soviet camps, a bold policy for integration and closer political links among them, accompanied by that for freedom from big-power hegemony, is what is demanded now. Necessarily, this new approach cannot be anything except an honest federative one.

PARTHA CHATTERJEE

Local Conflicts and the Contemporary International System : Some Theoretical Conjectures on the Bangladesh War

THE BANGLADESH War of 1971¹ raises several interesting questions regarding certain significant changes in the nature of the contemporary international system. This was the first major international crisis in which the United States and China collaborated jointly to oppose the Soviet Union. Does this signify a basic change in the pattern of international alliances, or is this merely an interesting but untypical variant of the familiar bipolar system of world politics?

We will approach the question by first considering the nature of alliances and the significance of local conflicts in the two major historical systems of international politics—the classical balance of power system and the bipolar system. We will then analyze the pattern of alliances on the issue of Bangladesh and relate it to the two historical models, and then attempt some conjectures regarding the contemporary international system.

I

The term 'local conflict' is always used to denote a war that is confined to a limited geographic area, but even under this category it often refers to several different kinds of conflict. It may refer to a military action by one of the super powers within its own 'bloc' without any serious risk of confrontation with the other super power, such as the US intervention in the Dominican Republic, or the Soviet intervention in Hungary or Czechoslovakia. It may also refer to an action by a super power or by a major member of one of the power blocs against a minor power with some risk of confrontation with the other bloc, such as in the Anglo-French action against Egypt, or the US intervention in Vietnam. Finally, it may refer to a conflict in a localized

area between the two super powers themselves : no such conflict has yet taken place, although there were clear risks of such an eventuality in the Berlin and Cuba crises. There is this variety of connotations because the term 'local conflict' in loose usage seems to imply a qualitative and quantitative limitation of the war. Hence, the whole notion of 'limited war' involving one or both super powers, when associated with a geographic limitation of the conflict, enters into the concept.

As a local conflict, the Bangladesh War falls into none of these categories. It was a geographically limited conflict between secondary non-nuclear powers only. At least three major powers — the United States, the Soviet Union and China — were interested in the conflict in an important way ; none, however, entered the conflict with direct military participation. In other words, this was not a 'limited war' involving one or both super powers on one or both sides. This was a purely local conflict between secondary powers.

Now, in the context of a bipolar system of international politics such local conflicts generally have a certain significance. It has been shown² that while the incidence of local wars in the present world has increased steadily, most of these have been anti-regime wars with foreign participation. In fact, since 1963 there has been no major political war without overt foreign participation. Many of these wars have led to direct military intervention by a super power, in most cases by the United States. However, even if there has been no military intervention, the major powers have in every case expressed diplomatic support, and often provided material aid, to one or the other party in the conflict, and have in many cases exerted considerable diplomatic pressures to secure a favourable outcome. The conflict between Israel and the Arab nations is one such case, where the contributions of the United States and the Soviet Union as supporters of the respective sides have now reached gigantic proportions.

This inevitable political involvement of the super powers in any local conflict follows from the essential nature of the bipolar system of the international politics. Unlike the classical European states system, international politics is now conducted on a truly global basis. The process started with the gradual colonization of the entire non-European world by the European powers and the subsequent partitioning among themselves of their colonial acquisitions. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, this dividing up was conducted according to the requirements of maintaining the European equilibrium — the much vaunted 'balance of power'. When the attempt was made to divide up China in this fashion, three new powers — the United States, Japan and Russia — entered the picture, and all three were, with regard to China at least, Pacific powers, not overtly interested in the European equilibrium. From here onwards, the position of Europe



as the sole arbiter of world politics was to erode rapidly.³ Then in mid-century came the termination of formal political control over the colonies: this brought into world politics a large number of 'new states', sovereign, with at least the legal capacity to act as independent members of an international political system encompassing all of humanity.

Alongside this historic development occurred the division of the European and North American states into rival ideological blocs, soon institutionalized into opposing military alliances. In ideological warfare, especially in a democratic age, strength of numbers is important. Allies in the 'third world' therefore became valuable as partners in the ideological cold war as well as for conventional geopolitical reasons. Simultaneously, with vastly improved communications and the penetration of Western political ideologies into the new states, political conflicts, both domestic and international, came to be viewed as the confrontation of two opposing social systems. As a result of all these factors, any political conflict, even if ostensibly of only a localized character, tended to have ramifications far beyond its borders. The super powers, consequently, could not afford to ignore such local conflicts.

What is most remarkable in this pattern of diplomatic alignments during local crises of this sort in the days of bipolarity and the cold war is not just the fact that expressions of support were justified in ideological terms, but that this support was always predictable, and once made, inflexible. The idea was always to confront the other side, at the very least in an ideological debate over the issues of a particular conflict, or, if conventional geopolitical considerations were also involved, with diplomatic and military support to the respective allies involved in the conflict, or as in Korea, Indo-China or Latin America, with direct military participation involving strategies of 'limited conventional war' 'manipulation of the risk of escalation', 'brinkmanship', etc.⁴ Diplomatic alignments in the bipolar system of world politics were rigid, and irrespective of the presence of geopolitical or strategic considerations, any involvement by the big powers in a local conflict was rationalized in fervidly ideological terms.

This was a relatively unprecedented phenomenon in international politics. Europe's classical balance of power system was particularly marked by extremely flexible alliance systems. The very stability of the system depended upon this.⁵ Diplomacy was conducted with the primary objective of maintaining the European equilibrium. For this it was necessary to make frequent shifts in alignments. Of course, there were several factors, both technological and ideological, that made possible the employment of this method of maintaining the stability of the international system. In the first place, the European situation in

the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was characterized by relatively fixed national capabilities and a relatively stagnant war technology. Wars were never disastrously expensive and did not involve any large scale civil destruction. Wars, and alliances for war, therefore, were admissible instruments for maintaining the balance of power. Secondly, national capabilities were roughly comparable; among the five or six major powers there did not exist any which were overwhelmingly powerful when compared to the others. As a result, adjustments aimed at maintaining the equilibrium could be satisfactorily made by territorial or financial compensations and so on. Ideologically, the period was characterized by 'a common ideology of aristocratic, and monarchical conservatism, tempered by limited reform.'⁶ Even at times when there was no ideological consensus as such, as in the Bismarckian 'Concert' after 1871 when in their domestic politics liberal England and France were in marked contrast to the rest of Europe, there was a clear consensus to subordinate ideology to *Realpolitik* in matters of foreign policy.

None of these conditions were present in the bipolar world. Total war between the United States and the Soviet Union would be catastrophic; even a purely conventional war could now be many times more destructive than the last World War. Secondly, the capabilities of the two super powers, both in quantity and quality, are of a completely different order from the other powers of the world. Thirdly, as we have already seen, ideology played a major part in determining alignments, and in the ideological cold war, all flexibility in alliance-making was completely lost.

Now, a significant change in this rigid bipolar structure began to be apparent from the early 'sixties. There was a considerable loosening of the Western alliance system. France under de Gaulle openly displayed its lack of faith in the US guarantee of nuclear protection and began to disengage from NATO. On the other side, a serious dispute, territorial and ideological, developed between the Soviet Union and China, the two largest communist nations. Meanwhile, the United States and the Soviet Union decided to get together to attempt a limitation of their nuclear armaments on which their expenditures had already reached astronomical figures. By the late 'sixties, the ideological cold war was a thing of the past, and people were talking of detente and a new multipolar system of international politics. The two major international conflicts in the world at this time — the Indo-China War and the perpetual crisis in the Middle East — however, still featured the United States and the Soviet Union on opposite sides, and in Vietnam, China was supporting the Communist movement against the US army and the US backed regimes. The Bangladesh



War of 1971 was the first instance of a major international conflict involving a significant shift of alliances.

II

On the Bangladesh issue, the position of the Soviet Union has been the most consistent. From the mid-sixties, especially since the Soviet role in the Tashkent settlement of 1965, there has been a steadily increasing friendship between the Soviet Union and India. This diplomatic alliance was formalized in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of August 1971. When the situation exploded in East Pakistan in March 1971, the Soviet Union, even while maintaining diplomatic ties with Pakistan, criticized the atrocities committed by the Pakistani Army in its attempt to crush the liberation movement. Soviet support for India's position on the issue of Bangladesh climaxed in its dramatic opposition to any vote in the UN Security Council labelling India as the aggressor and calling for an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of troops. Consistent with this policy, the Soviet Union has also extended diplomatic recognition to Bangladesh since its liberation and has already established close economic ties with the new nation.

The Soviet position during this crisis, being in accordance with a consistent policy of support for India, is easy to explain. In plain geopolitical terms, the Indian subcontinent is of vital importance to Soviet interests. It is of immense value in the conventional military sense in view of the Soviet dispute with China. It is also of great importance in relation to Soviet efforts to increase its naval presence in the Indian Ocean to break the Western monopoly of naval power in these waters. The policy has also been justified in ideological terms: Soviet support for the Government of Sm. Gandhi is seen as an alliance with the progressive section of the Indian bourgeoisie in its attempt to crush the forces of reaction in Indian society and to combat the pressures exerted by the imperialist powers. Similarly, it saw the movement in Bangladesh as the struggle of an oppressed people against the tyranny of a military dictatorship.

The position of the Chinese has also been one of relatively consistent support for the Pakistan Government. From the Chinese point of view, the arrangement was convenient in terms of simple *realpolitik*: China and Pakistan could unite in mutual opposition to India. Later the arrangement was also justified in relation to the Sino-Soviet dispute: the Soviet Union was moving into closer alliance with India, and it was only natural that China should ally with Pakistan. The Pakistan Government under President Ayub Khan and his then Foreign Minister Bhutto was at this time seeking to move out of its exclusive dependence on its Western allies and find greater flexibility in dealing with

the single focal point of Pakistani foreign policy — its relations with India. China was not unwilling to step into the power vacuum in Pakistan with economic and military aid, and the alliance was to the mutual convenience of both sides. Accordingly, therefore, the Chinese labelled the dispute in East Pakistan as Pakistan's internal affair, criticized India's support to the Mukti Bahini, condemned India as the aggressor in the December War and, from its new seat in the UN Security Council, called for immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of troops. At no time, however, did China seriously threaten to enter into the conflict militarily. Indeed, the Chinese strategy seems to have been to gain influence in Pakistan in its opposition to India and the Soviet Union without incurring any major costs.

Although the Chinese alliance with Pakistan is understandable only in purely geopolitical and *realpolitik* terms, and no credible ideological rationale has been, or indeed can be, given for it, yet on the question of the Bangladesh movement some ideological justification has been provided for the Chinese position. China's stand was that the liberation movement under the leadership of the Awami League was simply an attempt by the East Pakistan bourgeoisie in league with the imperialists to capture power, and support to the movement would only mislead the people of East Pakistan. It seems probable that the Chinese policy was based only on a short-term calculation of the diplomatic gains to be had from its support of the Pakistan Government. In the event of a prolonged guerrilla war for the liberation of Bangladesh, it is possible that the Chinese position would have shifted considerably.

The position of the United States in relation to Pakistan and India has undergone a series of major fluctuations. In the 'fifties, Pakistan was a full-fledged member of both CENTO and SEATO, two integral parts of the Western alliance system around the world. To Pakistan, this provided security against what it saw as the threat from India. To the United States, Pakistan formed an important link in the strategic chain around the territory of the Soviet Union, especially since the United States had still not developed long-range missiles to deliver its nuclear weapons. This dependence on the Western bloc, however, put Pakistan in a particularly inflexible position in its diplomatic relations, as reflected, for instance, in its inability to condemn the Anglo-French-Israeli action in the Suez in 1956. The policy began to show serious flaws when the Western nations decided to help India arm itself against China after the 1962 incidents on the Sino-Indian border. By this time the strategic value to the United States of Pakistan's territory had diminished considerably, since it did not need to maintain the strategic air command any more on Pakistani soil. Pakistan, therefore, revised its policy drastically and began to move out of

the sphere of Western influence and into closer ties with China. The situation continued in this fashion until the recent crisis. Throughout the period of the military action by the Pakistan Government to forcibly crush the movement in East Pakistan, the United States Government did not utter a single word of criticism. During the December War itself, it took a clearly anti-Indian and pro-Pakistani stand, with private exhortations by the President himself to make all official statements tilt decidedly in favour of Pakistan. In the Security Council too, it sided with China in calling India the aggressor and demanding immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of troops.

What were the reasons for this sudden interest in Pakistan? Ideologically, the US position would be hard to defend on the basis of its professed love for democracy, liberty, the right of self-determination, etc. In fact, the bulk of domestic criticism in the United States against the Government's policy pointed out this stark contradiction between the moral professions and the practical policy. Indeed, the US Government did not at any time attempt to defend its policy in ideological terms. On the basis of its own explanations, the policy was determined by power considerations alone. It was part of a global strategy to combat the growing Soviet influence in various parts of the world. The impetus for this new strategy came with the sudden awareness in the United States of the reality of nuclear 'parity' with the Soviet Union, and the apprehensions of a Soviet breakthrough in the field of nuclear weaponry which might jeopardize the delicate balance of mutual deterrence. The chief justification for the US support to Pakistan was the need to demonstrate to the Soviet Union the willingness on the part of the United States to oppose the growth of Soviet influence in the Indian subcontinent and the Indian Ocean. In this the United States restricted its role mainly to the diplomatic front, except for a reported attempt to aid the Pakistan military effort by transferring arms through Jordan, Iran and Turkey, and the rather dramatic entry of the US aircraft carrier *Enterprise* into the Bay of Bengal. This latter move might have been aimed at intimidating the Indian Navy into relaxing its blockade (which did not make too much sense, since the United States did not at any time seem prepared to risk a direct armed clash — the threat could not have been credible), or it might have been a mere demonstration to the Soviet Union of US naval presence in the Indian Ocean area.

Since the end of the War, the United States is yet to recognize Bangladesh, although it claims to be considering such a move for quite some time⁷; this may, in fact, be meant to allay domestic criticism. The situation in Pakistan itself is unclear, and the United States may be waiting for the dust to settle. However, if the policy of opposition to the Soviet Union in local conflicts is followed consistently, it seems safe to assume that fresh moves would be made by the United States to regain

lost influence in Pakistan. It also follows that friendly gestures would be made towards Bangladesh to counter what the United States surely perceives to be the unchecked growth of Soviet influence there.

III

As we mentioned at the outset, the Bangladesh War is the first major international crisis in which the United States and China have sided together to oppose the Soviet Union. This fact raises perhaps the most challenging question regarding the significance of the Bangladesh War in contemporary international relations. Does this augur an altogether new pattern of global politics or is this simply a minor aberration from a still primarily bipolar system?

In this crisis there were certain clear deviations from the usual pattern of big power involvement in local conflicts in the bipolar system of world politics with which we have been so familiar since the end of the last Great War. The first deviation concerns the role of China. China is a communist country, and as such, is committed to the struggle against US imperialism. In Indo-China it has consistently supported the liberation movements with finances and armaments; in this part of the world it is clearly pitted against the United States. Further, on the question of Taiwan, it is the United States which has single-handedly propped up the Chiang regime and rejected all claims of the People's Republic to the island. The United States was also the principal opponent to the proposal in the UN General Assembly to replace the Taiwan Government with the People's Republic in China's permanent seat in the Security Council. Indeed, the United States remains the only major power that has still not recognized the legality of the People's Republic. Yet, on the issue of Bangladesh and the Indo-Pakistan War, China and the United States found themselves on the same side of the fence. China and the United States, therefore, supported each other in the Bangladesh crisis, while being virtually at war with each other in Indo-China: they thus took opposite stands on two major local conflicts at the same time.

The second major deviation from the usual bipolar pattern is the fact that there is no longer the urge to provide firm ideological justification for foreign policy decisions. It seems now to be generally accepted that considerations other than purely ideological ones might be of crucial importance in the making of foreign policy. Hence, separate areas and separate issues are now considered in reference to their own particular effects upon the national interest. There is, therefore, the possibility of divergent assessments of an alliance with a particular nation on different issues.

Of course, in this particular instance, the US-China alignment on



the Bangladesh question has an obvious relation to the Sino-Soviet dispute which has developed and blossomed through the 'sixties, and to the recent signs of a detente between Washington and Peking. The most evident explanation of this pattern of alliances is that in view of the long-standing conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, the relatively recent dispute between China and the Soviet Union, and their mutual apprehension of the growing influence of the Soviet Union in various parts of the world, the United States and China decided to bury their ideological differences for the time being and range their combined diplomatic power in opposition to the Soviet Union.

Does this mean, then, that we have moved out of the bipolar era into one of tripolarity? Or perhaps with the rise of a combined Europe, and Japan, and India, we are moving to a new multipolar global balance of power system?

There are several difficulties in these very speculative propositions. First, the fundamental dimension of bipolarity — the antagonism between the United States and the Soviet Union — remains unchanged. In all local conflicts in which the interests of both these super powers are involved — Indo-China, the Middle East, South Asia — they are on opposite sides. Even in the Bangladesh crisis, as we have already pointed out, the actions of the United States were primarily directed against the Soviet Union. What was novel in that situation was the fact that an important power, China, once a full-fledged member of the Communist 'bloc' and still ideologically and actively committed to the fight against US imperialism, actually co-operated with the United States against the Soviet Union.

Secondly, the technological factor of nuclear bipolarity is still very real. It is true that countries such as China, France and Britain also possess nuclear weapons. Of these, the British weapons system is merely an adjunct to the American. The French 'independent deterrent' is aimed at the Soviet Union. The Chinese do not as yet seem to have a delivery system capable of reaching the US mainland; at the moment most of their missiles are presumably directed at the Soviet Union. Now, none of these secondary powers really possesses a nuclear capability that could deter either of the major powers independently. In other words, none of them has the capacity to retaliate on a second strike (even a countervalue second strike) to inflict sufficient damages so as to deter the United States or the Soviet Union from attacking in the first place. Of all the nuclear powers of the world, such a balance of stable mutual deterrence exists only between the Soviet Union and the United States. And considering even present technological levels, it is very difficult to visualize any of the other powers attaining an invulnerable second-strike capability *vis-a-vis* the United States or the Soviet Union.

Now, since the rise of the other independent nuclear powers neces-

sarily destabilizes the balance of deterrence, the two nuclear super powers have a definite interest in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons to other countries. The existence of small nuclear powers with primarily offensive weapons systems creates incentives for both sides to launch a pre-emptive strike in a crisis situation. And because of the multiplicity of decision-makers, it also raises the chances of a nuclear war by mistake or accident. Moreover, with the enormous expenditures of resources now involved in the development, deployment, and maintenance of nuclear weapons systems, both the United States and the Soviet Union seem to realize the urgency of some kind of arms limitation; if there are new nuclear opponents to reckon with, the prospects of mutually satisfactory arms limitation becomes more remote. Consequently, it is not in the interests of the two super powers to see the world move to a system of nuclear multipolarity.

Not that the super powers are in complete control of the world; they do not necessarily have the freedom to shape the pattern of global politics to suit their interests. Indeed, the fact that the big powers are willing to carry their old disputes into new diplomatic channels involving the emerging powers rather than jointly prevent their ascent indicates that there is still no perception of a serious threat to the stability of nuclear deterrence between the United States and the Soviet Union.

It seems, then, that the contemporary international system is taking the form of a series of rather flexible alliance arrangements in various tension areas of the world under the overall cover of the bipolar rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union and the balance of mutual nuclear deterrence. This is different from the bipolarity of the cold war era. Both the Western and Eastern blocs of old are now far more flexible arrangements: France has only minimal connexions with NATO, West Germany is basking in the sunshine of *Ostpolitik*, a combined West Europe is now already a serious economic challenge to the USA. Rumania is displaying considerable freedom of action in walking the tightrope between the Soviet Union and China. On top of this, the Bangladesh crisis produced the first clear alliance between the United States and China. This arrangement is, however, not quite the same as the classical balance of power system of Europe. While there are flexible alliances with the chief object of maintaining the equilibrium in particular local areas, the overall global balance still depends on the existence of mutual deterrence between the super powers who still stand on a completely different level of power from the rest of the world. The idea of the new system is to make for greater flexibility in coping with newly emerging forces in a world whose survival depends on the overwhelming technological requirement of a stable balance of deterrence between the two major nuclear powers.



Meanwhile, the Sino-US effort to prevent the break-up of Pakistan, if this was the objective of their action, has proved ineffectual, and Bangladesh has emerged as the newest sovereign nation of the world. The story of its birth comprises a singularly dramatic episode in the history of the modern world. We have attempted to point out that it may have also heralded significant changes in the character of the international political system.

NOTES AND REFERENCES :

1. Although India and Pakistan were the principal participants in the December War and fighting occurred on both the eastern and western borders between the two countries, the name Indo-Pakistan War neglects the role of the Bangladesh Mukti Bahini. For want of a better term, therefore, I will refer to the conflict as the Bangladesh War.
2. Istvan Kende, 'Twentyfive Years of Local War', *Journal of Peace Research*, 8 (1971), 1. pp. 5-22.
3. Geoffrey Barraclough, *An Introduction to Contemporary History* (Penguin, 1967), pp. 105-10. Also, F. H. Hinsley, 'The Development of the European States System since the Eighteenth Century,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, 2 (1961), pp. 69-80.
4. In fact, in 1961 it was estimated that by far the most common pattern of alignment in the United Nations General Assembly was along the 'East-West' dimension, this being five times more common than the next most frequent pattern, the alignment of underdeveloped countries against developed countries, and this includes voting on numerous issues of only minimal political controversy. See Bruce M. Russett, *Trends in World Politics* (Macmillan, New York, 1965), p. 72. Also, H. R. Alker and B. M. Russett. *World Politics in the General Assembly*, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1965).
5. For a formal analysis of the stability conditions of the balance of power system, see Partha Chatterjee, 'The Classical Balance of Power Theory,' *Journal of Peace Research*, 9 (1972), 1.
6. Richard N. Rosecrane, *Action and Reaction in World Politics* (Little Boston, Brown, 1963), p. 28.
7. Since this paper was written, the United States Government extended recognition to Bangladesh on April 4 1972.

BASAB SARKAR

Bangladesh and Super Powers : A Study in Basic Approaches

BANGLADESH, the youngest nation state of the world, has just taken its rightful place in the political complex of this subcontinent. Its emergence into freedom at the height of an intense and bitter national liberation struggle, spread over a period of nine months, brought into sharp relief the developing power relations that the leading members of international community like to see prevail in this region. The nature and extent of the intricate power relations are so revealing that it took many people by surprise. Since India willynilly got involved in this liberation struggle from the very start and contributed largely to its success, it had to bear in full the impact of big power politics. India's role in this significant event gave it a special position and a new dimension in the politics of the subcontinent.

But independent Bangladesh is not, and was never meant to be, India's protege. It has a status and a personality all its own. Here is nationalism and national pride revealed at a high pitch. Its people brooked no interference in their struggle, did not temporize in face of heavy odds and could not be defeated by the mighty combination of forces that their oppressors had the good opportunity to muster, both in political and real terms, and in the end the victory was theirs. This new nation, a new political entity in South Asia, is now being called upon to face an entirely new situation in the subcontinent, which in part is its own creation.

Since Bangladesh is an integral part of this subcontinent and a vital part at that, its future relation with the world outside will be conditioned to some extent by the subcontinental politics. Conversely,

it would be impossible for any outside power to formulate the policies towards Bangladesh in isolation from the prevailing political realities in the subcontinent. This is equally true for the other constituent states of the region — India and Pakistan. In other words, bilateralism has ceased to have any meaning whatsoever in the international relations of these constituent states and the world outside. This is particularly relevant in relation to the policy formulation of the major states, the USA, China and the USSR. These powers are expected to consider the situations in their totality, weigh and assess them accordingly and make moves. However, it is important to add that the USSR has an edge over the other two and possibly the rest of the world, in the emerging political matrix of the subcontinent.

When independence came, the Indian subcontinent acquired almost immediately a place of importance for itself in the bipolar politics of the world. In those days the centre of gravity of world forces was in the process of being shifted from Europe to Asia. The strategic position of the subcontinent with a solid geographical landmass became highly important in the context of the global politics. The policy of alliances and alignments that the USA introduced as the surest and top priority item to contain and fight communism in the international arena, however, met with only a limited success in South Asia due to Indian intransigence.

By then China had gone red and the American urgency to contain and thwart the socialist world community had become all the more pressing. But only in the parts of the subcontinent, that constituted the state of Pakistan, could the USA find a natural and loyal ally. And Pakistan's identification with the West was complete, as President Ayub recorded in his autobiography, by the time he assumed power in 1958. To date that identification remains, by and large, unchanged, whatever President Bhutto might say to the contrary. There had been stresses and strains no doubt, but when their prime interests demanded it, neither side did ever feel handicapped to lean on the other or to make use of their very special relations. In fact, they continue to remain the same good old partners as ever, in their politico-military commitments to the South Asian region in general and to this subcontinent in particular.

In South Asia all these years, the US policy to contain communism was directed first and foremost against the Soviet Union. China's turning red only added quantitatively to the US concern. President Truman in his annual report to the US Congress on Mutual Security Programme in December 1951, urged to cultivate Pakistan as a stabilizing factor in that part of the world. He said : "Pakistan is one of the youngest nations, but already progressive and powerful. Its friendship for the West may become an important factor in giving stability to the Near

East. At the same time Pakistan is a valuable ally in South Asia because of its strategic location in the Indian Ocean and its control of land passes from Central Asia."¹

The Chinese 'menace' did not loom large in the cold and calculating mind of the American President in the South Asian region, although it was felt to be vital enough in South East Asia and Far East. That this attitude did not change materially over the years is evident from the fact that America's natural and loyal ally Pakistan was allowed to develop and maintain relations with China all through. In fact, in South Asia in those days, America's main headache was a recalcitrant India, refusing to fall in line with it and preaching the dangerous gospel of neutralism and non-alignment, rather than a communist China.

Pakistani leaders had a better appreciation of the minds of American Administration, than most of the outsiders. They capitalized on the American hostility towards India and took advantage of the pact mania of the Dulles era to build up a military machine against a supposed menace from India as well as to suppress the democratic aspirations of their own people. The USA all along pretended that its arms aid was exclusively against the communist menace. Two things, however, are interesting to note in this context. Throughout the fifties the US State Department harped on the tune that non-alignment was immoral, that the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was maintaining a double standard in foreign policy and that he was being guided by crypto-communists. Secondly, the American involvement in the Asian politics since the war has one unchanged characteristic, that of siding with the hated, authoritarian national regimes against their people. These local clients of the USA maintained their tenure in power with the arms given to them, by ruthlessly suppressing popular movements for democratic changes which were dubbed communist subversive activities. Naturally, fighting communists within and preparing to meet the communist 'menace' without, fitted in well with the American grand design to contain communism. Pakistani leaders were not less adept in this art.

But the USA was the champion of the free and democratic world and India had to be recognized as the larger democracy the world had ever known. Since that democratic status of India could not be wished away, but on the other hand was to be placated, the USA offered India similar military aid to bolster up its defence preparedness. But defence against whom or what, was the natural Indian query. For, India did not apprehend any threat from any of its communist neighbours and had no aggressive intent either against any state in the region. Naturally it had no need for an arms supply from the USA.

India rather tried to persuade the USA to desist from its military aid policy to a constituent power in the subcontinent as that would

surely impair the course of normal political development in the region. It feared that this military aid policy would lead to an arms race in the area, and since neither India nor Pakistan could afford it on the strength of their respective national economies, this must inevitably be a race for borrowed strength. This was precisely the thing the Americans wanted. So the pact-maniac US administration refused to listen to this counsel of reason. The USA hoped that if India could be brow-beaten to accept arms aid similar to Pakistan, that would fill in the gap in its *cordon sanitaire* against the socialist world community. If it does not, then a constant pressure could be maintained on India for a desired political change. It needs be noted that the USA was then hatching a master plan of letting Asians fight Asians, which came to be true twice in less than next twenty years in this region.

The American policy introduced the concept of military balance in the politics of the subcontinent. It was further accentuated following the 1962 border war between India and China. And with this war the direct political involvement of China and then Soviet Union, into the affairs of the subcontinent, became a hard reality.

China has a unique geopolitical position in relation to this subcontinent. It has a long common frontier with India, which also touches in part Pakistan, over its occupied territory in Kashmir. In the early fifties China was all friendly towards India, the champion of the non-aligned world, but at the same time it maintained a policy of cautious reserve towards Pakistan. It led China to remain non-committal on the Kashmir question, the bone of contention between India and Pakistan. China was fully aware of the state of mind of the agitated Pakistani people and thought it necessary and wise to placate them. The reason undoubtedly was to gain a foothold in Pakistani politics, which could be turned to advantage as a lever against India, if occasion were to arise.

That Pakistan regards the Kashmir question as the unfinished business of partition, is known to all having even a nodding acquaintance with the politics of the subcontinent, though President Bhutto now calls it, as if it were, an obsession with Pakistani ideology. Any way, Pakistan all along held that politics in the region could become normal, once the Kashmir question was settled, of course, to its satisfaction. Over years, Pakistan became convinced, or at least it said it was, that it had only a military solution. It sought help from the big powers and was prepared to pay any price for any effective help given to its attempts to force a solution on India. But although the USA, the principal mentor of the Pak regime, was willing to go far enough to accommodate Pakistan, still it never went that far as would have a permanent breach with India. It remained content with a Pakistan pursuing the American game in the area. So it gave Pakistan a long rope of manoeuvre-

ability, which enabled it to befriend China, without snapping vital political, economic and military relations with the USA.

Thus ensued a new aspect of super power politics in the subcontinent that meant many things to many people and each judged it according to his predisposition. Pakistan's relations with the USA remained in substance intact, which satisfied the pro-western people and military leaders. It was allowed to veer close to China, since the ruling class was given a free chit to do so, under the cover of exigencies of the circumstances, which was hailed by the left and radical elements as a welcome shift. And China responded not only favourably to this new look of the Pakistani politics, but also urged its followers in Pakistan not to create any situation that might embarrass its chief architect, President Ayub. Tariq Ali, the militant student leader from West Pakistan, gave a vivid account of this Chinese politics in his book, 'Pakistan : Military Rule or People's Power', published in late 1970. Further relation with China pleased all those orthodox, blind anti-India elements who wanted a *zihad* to liberate Kashmir. By then China had publicly identified with Pakistan over the Kashmir question.

It was indeed a new situation. It brought to light a unique spectacle of anti-communist and imperialist USA happily co-existing, sharing a common berth, with anti-imperialist communist China in Pakistan, in their common enmity towards India. It highlighted the possible area of co-operation and agreement of these two powers in their assessment of the world situation. It is possible to infer from this unique development, the role Pakistan is to play in promoting Sino-US accord. The now famous Kissinger mission and all that, as well as the Sino-US reaction to the struggles in Bangladesh and after, are natural sequences of this new found accord between the two super powers. No amount of jugglery of words and ideological overtones are enough to hide the simple truth that the USA and China find it necessary, possible and even desirable to act in unison in the politics of South Asia. This is a painful reality indeed.

One explanation of this unique development is the role of Soviet Union in this subcontinent. The Tashkent Accord gave the USSR a massive entry into the politics of South Asia. The Soviet Union had all along taken a principled stand on all issues affecting the subcontinent. It was initially rather cool towards the political changes in the area in the late forties. Stalin reacted sharply in those early days, when India was partitioned, and he called the new state of Pakistan, based on Islamic religion as the rationale of its birth, as an anachronism. Pak leaders never forgave Stalin for what they called an act of indiscretion, and being by political conviction what they were, they did not hesitate to join anti-communist crusade against the Soviet Union. When relations started improving after Stalin's death, Pakistan, being a committed

nation to the American scheme of global politics, could not move to be friendly with the USSR.

Non-aligned India with its policies of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism not only came closer to the socialist world community in general and the USSR in particular, but had to identify with them on many issues in national interest. Objectively India helped in the creation and development of a world outlook among the newly liberated states, which despite many limitations, effectively curbed world imperialism. Naturally the USSR as the leader of the socialist world felt keen about developing friendly relations with India, on political, security and ideological grounds. Those were the days of intense cold war and an opening in the sanitary cordon that India provided and resolutely maintained, was to be cultivated at all costs. Khrushchev did that precisely and laid the foundation of wide ranging Indo-Soviet co-operation.

Over years this relation further deepened and widened and matured into close political understanding, which found culmination in the twenty years' Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation, signed in August 1971. The treaty provided India with the much needed political support in its efforts to help the liberation struggle in Bangladesh. That the treaty was a great deterrent to all the oppressors of Bangladesh, direct and indirect, was freely acknowledged by the people and leaders of Bangladesh. It was the manifestation of a resolute and principled stand that the USSR has always taken on the side of national liberation struggles against imperialism anywhere in the world. The Soviet stand on the issues affecting the subcontinent, forced the USA and China to come out in the open in united opposition to the evolving political pattern in the region. Since the issues affecting the region are getting clear with each passing day, all the outside powers interested in the area are being increasingly compelled to cast off their pretensions and appear in their true colours. The liberation struggle in Bangladesh provided the necessary touchstone to the peoples of the region to properly assess the interested powers.

This is not at all surprising. In the third world, the USA and the USSR clashed time and again since 1945, in their basic political approaches to the concept of *status quo*. The old established powers are always interested in the *status quo*, as that gives them opportunities to move about and play within the known variables of a given situation. The USA, the USSR and China are no exceptions to this general rule. But the socialist states differ with the imperialist ones in one fundamental aspect. They know and uphold the doctrine that with changes in the correlation of forces new situations are bound to develop and their task is to watch them and help them in the process. In short, their approach is not to maintain what it is, but appreciate and help what is emerging as a rational sequence of the changing

correlation of forces. That is why they are always to be found on the side of progressive changes. The imperialist states, on the other hand, understand by *status quo* what it is, and are keen to maintain it as such. So they are invariably always on the side of conservatism and reaction. China claims itself to be an anti *status quo* power. But Bangladesh proved how hollow the Chinese contention was.

It is not difficult to understand the American policy stances in Bangladesh. For proper evaluation, the US policy towards the subcontinent in general and Bangladesh in particular is to be viewed in the context of post-Vietnam Asia. It is eager to have some sort of pre-eminence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean area, and for that the balance of forces in the subcontinent is to be kept favourably disposed towards itself. It was widely reported in the world press during the early days of the liberation struggle that the USA offered responsible leaders in Bangladesh, including possibly Sheikh Mujib, political and diplomatic support for a declaration of independence provided they agreed to the free use of some natural ports in the southern districts of the province by the US navy. This would have given it an enviable position in the subcontinent. Of course so long it did enjoy a position of influence, as Pakistan in the two wings at the either end of the subcontinent as a loyal ally gave it enough of opportunities to pressurize India. This was the line that Pakistan followed all through and it has no objection to others following the same course, provided they are friendly with Pakistan. Pakistan took it as an article of faith that friendship with it must mean partisanship for it, i.e. hostility towards India. Anybody showing as much friendship for it as for India, is suspect in Pakistani eyes. The USA with its international outlook and global strategic interests fitted well with this Pakistani notion of subcontinental politics.

After the emergence of Bangladesh, the American desire to mend its relations with the new nation is motivated by the same outlook. It keenly felt the need for a political presence in the area and quietly pocketing its pride appeared on the scene with an enormous fund of dollars and 'generosity' to fish in the unsettled waters of Bangladesh. This face of America is not unknown to the freedom fighters. They know that it is real politics that has brought about this change in stances. But what about China?

It is hardly possible to explain rationally the Chinese stand in the context of its ideological position. Initially, it was widely held that the Chinese leaders were taking time to assess the nature and gravity of the political developments in Bangladesh, and once the assessment was over, they would come out in the open to support the liberation struggle. After all, it was sincerely believed that China could not remain a silent and indifferent onlooker to the massacre of the inno-

cents in a highly sensitive area by a military junta aided and abetted by the hated imperialists. But such expectations were soon belied. China came out instead vehemently against the liberation struggle, branding it as an anti-China move. It ignored the emerging reality and started doing all it could to strengthen the oppressor. From this policy stance, certain conclusions about the Chinese inevitably follow.

From the geopolitical angle, China cannot but be hostile to the emerging reality of Bangladesh, since it encompasses an area which has within an easy reach the troublesome Tibetan region, the soft underbelly of the mainland of China. It would wait and watch the developing combination of forces both within Bangladesh and without, before it decided upon the next move. China is not at all in a hurry to take a decision, since Pakistan is as yet, and expected to be so for some time to come, undecided. Even China may continue to ignore Bangladesh thereafter to disprove any collusion with Pakistan, till such a date when situations become favourable for it. China knows that it has nothing to fear either from India or Bangladesh or to lose from the current hostility. As its policy towards the subcontinent is basically Pak-oriented, it can afford to remain adamant till Pakistan is compelled by the logic of internal developments to try to ease the relations in the area. In short, China's feeling of serious concern about the developments in the subcontinent would be in direct ratio to the nature and extent of the area of agreement that Chou-Nixon talks revealed. That is why China's emergence in world politics, outside the narrow confines of the Far East, has a special significance for this subcontinent. It is worthwhile to note Bhutto's assertion made some years ago in this connexion that although China and the USA are arch antagonists their relations should not be assumed to remain always in a state of hyper-tension. And Bhutto is a knowledgeable person and his assertion has come true.

In fact, to the new state of Bangladesh this new found Sino-US entente, both overt and covert, poses a challenge to its integrity and freedom. A grudging recognition by Nixon does not solve the problem. He must be up to something, once he is pushed out of Vietnam, which is likely to come sooner than expected. Nixon knows that in a war-torn Bangladesh there would be many opportunities to play politics. There are classes of people, who are not at all happy with the modest changes that Bangladesh leaders propose to introduce in the economic and social fields. Pakistani collaborators and ultra left elements are too prone to lend a helping hand in any disruptive game, provided it comes as a move, with a covert support from both the USA and China. Further, agents from this side of the border, similarly inspired, are also working overtime to undermine the political base of Bangladesh.

The Sino-US challenge to Bangladesh is two dimensional in character. Both are hell bent to queer the pitch for this new state in international relations and especially in subcontinental relations using Pakistan as a lever. They seem to rely heavily on internal disorders which have at the moment both economic and ideological facades. They know that till the situation stabilizes in Bangladesh, which may hardly come in the near future, such opportunities as they like to have would be there in abundance. Both have a common object, therefore, in snapping Indo-Bangladesh relations. Considering the US policies in South Asia since the fifties, there should be no doubt about its intents, and capacity to do mischief. In South Asia the Chinese policies have developed throughout the sixties, viewing India as a constant inimical quantity and on the basis of cultivating anti-India stances all around. Among the super powers, both the USA and China have well co-ordinated long term policy perspectives in relation to this subcontinent. The USSR came very late in the day, but scored a much greater success, by identifying itself completely with the aspirations of the people and the emerging political pattern in the region.

As a littoral state Bangladesh would be called upon to deal directly with all the powers interested in the Indian Ocean area. Its ability to withstand pressure would depend upon the solidarity of its people. A serious economic difficulty, food shortage, political discontent and the resultant crisis in the national life, are the possibilities that might disturb this new born state. Against all this, it has a solid guarantee in Indo-Bangladesh friendship, which is backed by the political support of the socialist community led by the Soviet Union. For, the Soviet Union cannot afford to have a neighbouring region permanently in the grip of crisis. Its problems could be averted only if the three states of the subcontinent—India, Pakistan and Bangladesh—would arrive at a settlement of their outstanding differences and agree to build an area of peace and co-operation.

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SAURENDRANATH BHATTACHARYYA

Bangladesh and Power Blocs

I

TO MANY in India and elsewhere the eventual success of Bangladesh freedom struggle was never in doubt. The question was how long it would take as it was clear that the more prolonged it became the greater would be the sufferings for the people. The concentrated sufferings of nine months for the people have rare parallel in history. It is, however, a known fact that international power politics complicated matters infinitely and it was this play of big power politics which at one stage apparently created the apprehension of a bigger and wider conflagration centred round the issue of the freedom of Bangladesh. That the danger did not materialize was again in consequence of the play of big power politics and perhaps as a result of the hopeless situation of Pakistan Government so far as Bangladesh was concerned. From the very start, mere geography combined with the dogged determination of 75 million Bengalees actually made the total failure of the Pakistani misadventure a foregone conclusion.

From the very beginning of the Bangladesh freedom struggle it was quite clear that Pakistani military junta had undertaken a hopeless task in trying to keep under leash a completely alienated people through literal bloodbath. No person, not to speak of any statesman, with an iota of sense left could expect to keep under thralldom 75 million people through such remote control. The mere geographical barrier should have daunted even the power-crazy rulers of Pakistan. For them, however, it was very difficult to reconcile themselves to the idea of losing the hen that laid the golden eggs. They also relied too much on their big brothers. The stake of international power blocs

in this area emboldened them in the belief that Pakistan's integrity would have an appeal in the arena of international power politics. And for quite some time after the carnage was let loose in Bangladesh the international community, represented by the governmental power of different States, seemed to have been labouring under that notion. Hence, we see the attempt of different States to emphasize the 'internal affair' aspect of the problem, as raised by the Pak military junta and its patrons. And the reason for this is not far to seek.

II

The entities of India and Pakistan presented a set pattern in international politics for about a quarter of a century. Powers had attuned their policy to this reality. The South Asian part of their global strategy was moulded on the basis of this reality. A new reality may be difficult to adjust with. In any case, some time must elapse before it takes shape. Apart from this natural hesitation, regarding something emerging, something uncertain, the more weighty consideration was the advantages that the powers were being able to derive from the existing state of affairs in the subcontinent. And, as we know, the advantages were manifold.

The hostile relationship between India and Pakistan was ingrained, so to say, in their genesis. The British imperialism, before being forced out of the ruling power in the subcontinent, took adequate care to have the embodiment of their 'Divide and Rule' policy in the States of India and Pakistan. The device was carefully calculated in order to keep open the doors of imperialistic machinations in the subcontinent. However, notwithstanding the so-called peaceful transfer of power in the wake of massive anti-imperialist rising in different parts of the country in the post-world-war period through a compromise with the Indian vested interests, the strong root of anti-imperialism in India made it difficult for British imperialism to have a field day in India. The position in Pakistan was quite different. That State was not the result of any anti-imperialist struggle. Rather, it was the creation of imperialism and she became an open protege of British imperialism. The British imperialism was, however, no more its own self and as elsewhere in the world, it had to make room for the more resourceful and in a way its post-war mentor, the U.S. imperialism. Of course, the U.S. imperialism could not or did not do away with the presence of British imperialism in the area. Through the bureaucracy and the military, which were the handiwork of the British, the British imperialism had its own leverage in Pakistan but it was in no position to bear the burden of building up Pak industrial as well as war machinery. Commensurate

with its post-war global strategy, the U.S. imperialism secured a convenient base in Pakistan. In the language of Prof. Hans J. Morgenthau : "The military power of Pakistan is the measure of America's military power on that continent. . . . As a member of both the Baghdad Pact and SEATO she is the connecting link between the two defence organizations. Her government is as reliable and as co-operative as that of any of our Asian allies". (Military Illusions, The New Republic, Washington D.C.).

The magnitude of the U.S. economic and military aid may be appreciated from what has been said on the point by J. Leo Auspitz, Stephen A. Marglin and Gustav F. Papenek, all from the U.S.A. : "Since the early 1950's when Pakistan joined mutual security pacts of SEATO and CENTO, she has received massive economic and military aid from the United States. By 1969, economic aid amounted to about \$ 3 billion and military aid, a classified number, has been estimated to have been between \$ 1.5 billion and \$ 2 billion. This assistance has included F-104 Starfighters, F84 Sabre Jets, C-130 transports, Patton tanks, armoured personnel carriers, heavy artillery and automatic weapons."

According to the authors of *Conflict in East Pakistan : Background and Prospects* (Edward S. Mason, Robert Dorfman and Stephen A. Marglin) : "The quantum of U.S. military aid to Pakistan is a classified figure but two estimates put it between \$ 1.5 and \$ 2 billion for the period between 1954 and 1965". The authors obviously calculated the figure up to 1965 taking into account "the embargo on the delivery of arms to both Pakistan and India". The paper of Auspitz and others does, however, remark : "perhaps because the United States still believed it could compete for influence through arms sales, or perhaps due to the sheer momentum of long close ties between the Pentagon and the military superstructure in Pakistan, attempts to circumvent arms embargo gathered momentum in 1967". The attempts bore fruit in October, 1970, when "the Nixon Administration offered to sell Pakistan certain items including a squadron of F-104 Starfighters, a squadron of B-57 bombers and about 300 armoured personnel carriers."

III

It is, however, well known that Pakistani war machine did not starve all these years since 1965. It received re-enforcement from an unexpected quarter. The Soviet Union gained a major diplomatic incentive in this subcontinent by organizing Tashkent Conference between Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri of India and President Ayub Khan of Pakistan in the wake of the Indo-Pak War of 1965. That was a significant diplomatic achievement of the Soviet foreign policy.

To be accepted as an honest broker by both the conflicting countries is in itself a feat. It becomes all the more significant when we recall that the Soviet Union could make herself acceptable to two such conflicting countries as had particular economic and military ties or transactions with the U.S. and the U.K. Perhaps as a result of this role of honest broker the Soviet Union could not, and did not, come forward immediately to replenish Pak armoury, a task which was undertaken by the People's Republic of China. In course of time, however, the Soviet Union went forward to establish her leverage of arms delivery on Pakistan. It is maintained by some observers that Soviet attempts at wooing Pakistan was mainly aimed at minimizing Chinese influence. A strange feature of the play of international power politics in Pakistan had been the simultaneous aid given to Pakistan by all the international rivals. The U.S. reaction to Chinese intrusion in her sphere of influence in Pakistan was, to say the least, uncharacteristically mild. When we remember the violent U.S. reaction to Nasser's arms deal with the Soviet Union, it seems all the more strange. It may be that the U.S.A. did not mind if her burden was shared to some extent by even the Communist States, ostensibly to contain whom Pakistan was taken under her protective wings. The U.S. imperialism was so sure of her leverage that the marginal aid from and flirtation with the People's Republic of China did not cause any anxiety in White House nor in Pentagon. Soviet aid was still more marginal and could not even neutralize Chinese influence, not to speak of the U.S. influence. Of course, from The Tashkent days it was clear that in spite of closer ties of the Soviet Union with India, her assertion could not be lightly brushed aside. Soviet Union, on her side, showed keenness to establish a closer liaison with Pakistan.

Thus Pakistan was growing to be a hotbed of rivalry of world powers who had delineated their strategy in the area. The Independence struggle of Bangladesh was sure to make the strategy obsolete to a great extent. Moreover, any change in the subcontinent would upset the balance worked out over about a quarter of a century and we know that in spite of many revolutionary changes in the world, the principle of balance of power still counts a lot in international politics. Hence, all the world powers including the Soviet Union showed at least apparent keenness to maintain the integrity of Pakistan.

It was, however, an attempt to maintain the untenable, as the course of events proved. Of course, this reality of the situation made world powers wary in their responses. Barring the U.S.A. and the People's Republic of China no other State came forward to lend open support to the Pakistan Government. On the other hand, while the Soviet Union was the first among the world powers to protest against the "continuation of repressive measures and bloodshed in East Paki-

stan" at the topmost Government level and to make "an insistent appeal for the adoption of the most urgent measures to stop the bloodshed and repression against the population in East Pakistan and for turning to methods of a peaceful political settlement", even though she also desisted from lending any overt support to the freedom struggle of Bangladesh. Even after the outbreak of war between India and Pakistan as a result of the Pak air raids in the western frontier and even after Indian recognition to Bangladesh Government, the Soviet Union, in observing diplomatic propriety, continued to refer to Bangladesh as East Pakistan. Today, however, Bangladesh is very much a reality. Barring the People's Republic of China all other Big powers including the U.S.A. have now accorded diplomatic recognition to Bangladesh. That means that world powers have now prepared themselves to adjust to the reality of Bangladesh in this part of South Asia.

IV

In discussing the question of Bangladesh and power blocs, the issue has to be judged from two aspects : the attitude of Bangladesh to different powers and power blocs as also that of powers and power blocs to Bangladesh.

So far as the question of the attitude of Bangladesh towards power blocs is concerned it may be disposed of with the oft-repeated statement of Bangladesh Government that non-alignment will be the cornerstone of its foreign policy. Such issues have, however, different facets. The statements of any Government regarding its policies are not always taken as conclusive. Rather those are subjected to closer scrutiny on the bases of the economic, social and political objectives of that Government and the actual manifestations of the same. It must be admitted that as yet we have no adequate direct basis to form a firm opinion regarding the shape of Bangladesh foreign policy which is like any other field of its policies, at an incipient stage. However, from an indirect approach an assessment of the shape of Bangladesh foreign policy is quite possible.

As is well known, Bangladesh is in dire necessity of almost everything. Her reconstruction requirement is colossal and help from no quarter perhaps could be spurned. But the role of the powers, in a position to offer aid during Bangladesh freedom struggle has, naturally, given rise to reservations regarding obtaining help from certain States, notably the U.S.A., even though that country has the potential to be the biggest aid-giver. The role of the U.S. Government had been so hostile to the people of Bangladesh and Bangladesh freedom struggle that whatever might have been the attitude of leaders of Bangladesh

including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, any special relationship with the U.S.A. besides very formal diplomatic relationship seems to be ruled out. However, in the field of international relations, no position is immutable. Particularly, in view of the difference in the stand of the U.S. Government and of the Democratic Party on Bangladesh issue, it may be presumed that if in the ensuing Presidential election in the U.S.A. the Democratic Party wins, the possibility of more than formal relationship between Bangladesh and the U.S.A. cannot be ruled out. As is known, even after the atrocious role of the U.S. imperialism, Bangladesh is not denuded of admirers of the U.S. Government. If the White House has a Democrat as its occupant after the ensuing U.S. Presidential election, the fairly strong U.S. lobby in Bangladesh will be able to operate in a less inhibited manner. That ideological difference is no obstacle to U.S. or any other aid, for the matter of that, is by now well-established. Again, it is still to be seen whether Bangladesh develops, in the process of her national construction, social and economic system running counter to that obtaining in the U.S.A. There is, of course, the question of U.S. imperialism as such, be it under the guidance of the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. Whatever might be the difference in the reactions of these parties on specific issues, on the U.S. role in the international field the difference, if any, is in details and not in fundamentals. The most condemned phase of the Vietnam policy of the U.S. Government was initiated by President Kennedy and is now being conducted by a Republican President, who is still under the same imperialist illusion which lurks behind the policy of 'Vietnamization' of Vietnam war, which stands to be exposed in the face of the latest, if not the last, phase of the war.

Considering the global strategy of the U.S.A. and its manifestation in this part of the world it can be safely assumed that having once accepted the reality of Bangladesh, the U.S. Government will now try to establish its influence over Bangladesh and in doing so all its resourcefulness will be stretched to the utmost extent. Notwithstanding the talk of 'aid without string' it is well known that aid creates invisible strings. When we remember the fact that in the industrial field Bangladesh is really to build from a scratch, the difficulty in not accepting aid from any quarter becomes obvious. In case of a country with an industrial base strong enough to absorb foreign aid, the aid-giving country has less of a hold on the aid-receiving country. Even where there is an industrial base, the danger of its being completely overwhelmed with disproportionate foreign loan and aid is very real. That the creditor country, in such cases, can always force the debtor country to fall in line with it under the threat of subverting latter's economy, is not in any way far-fetched. The policy of the U.S. imperialism, whether guided by Republicans or Democrats, is one of establishing its

stranglehold over developing countries through military and economic aid. There is no reason to suppose that it will be any different in the case of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has had a foretaste of the U.S. policy during her freedom struggle. The question is whether the attempt of the U.S. imperialism to establish her stranglehold over Bangladesh, notwithstanding the disrepute in which she is held there, will meet with any success.

V

Of the two super powers the Soviet Union has been able to create a fund of goodwill for herself in Bangladesh even without transgressing the limits of diplomatic propriety openly. This has been created not only because the Soviet Union was the first big power in the world to raise her voice of protest against the persecution of East Pakistanis but also because of the knowledge that without steadfast support from the Soviet Union including the despatch of Soviet fleet to the Indian Ocean closely following the U.S. Seventh Fleet besides her repeated vetoing of pro-Pakistani resolutions in the Security Council, it would not have been possible to break the back of Pakistani militarism so soon. Naturally, the Soviet Union has a far better standing with the people of Bangladesh than before the outbreak of the freedom struggle. The Soviet Union has already come forward to help Bangladesh in her construction and Soviet aid can clearly be no hindrance to building a socialist economy by Bangladesh, doing away with private ownership of the means of production. Even with a non-socialist economy Soviet help could be obtained. If, however, the objective is to build up Socialist economy, the Soviet Union would be the natural help-giver.

The other big State which could help in this direction, viz., the People's Republic of China, is still to shed her strangely inimical attitude towards the freedom struggle of a nation and has perhaps the worst standing in general in Bangladesh. There is as yet no indication whether PRC has any idea of establishing formal diplomatic relation with Bangladesh. It is not conceivable that China has lost all interest in Bangladesh, particularly when one considers her keen interest in countries far and near. Bangladesh is a country which is rather near to China. In post-'65 days China had developed not only some economic interest in the then East Pakistan but also gained some political ground. It is difficult to contemplate China yielding ground completely here to her regional rival, India, and her ideological rival, Soviet Union. Yet, for China to gain a direct entry into Bangladesh for some time will in all probability be difficult. Particularly, with the good standing of both India and the Soviet Union in Bangladesh, that probability becomes strengthened.

Of the big powers of the capitalist world, the U.K. and France have managed not to forfeit the goodwill of the people of Bangladesh in spite of their tie with Pakistan. Both these States managed to keep up their uncommitted appearance and were not unduly procrastinating in according diplomatic recognition to Bangladesh after it was a *fait accompli*. The U.K. particularly seems to be anxious to keep up her tie with Bangladesh. The decision on admission of Bangladesh into the Commonwealth of Nations, though a legacy of Pakistan days so far as Bangladesh is concerned, proves that anxiety. The idea of bringing closer the three States in the subcontinent is perhaps a part of that anxiety. It is for Bangladesh Government to decide how far it can go with the idea, whose ramifications cannot, naturally, be divested from the legacy of the past British policy in the subcontinent.

VI

Though by the very nature of the momentous events of the nine months and by the virtue of geographical proximity, India is in an advantageous position in relation to Bangladesh, yet there is no reason to suppose that she would be able to develop the relationship according to her own best judgement. The action and reaction of big power rivalry will at every stage try to vitiate that relationship. At the same time, the utmost circumspection and caution should be deliberately practised in every field of relationship with Bangladesh in consideration of the susceptibilities of a newly independent country. Particular care must be taken to prevent the self-seekers on this side of the border from going to Bangladesh to serve their selfish interests. Bangladesh has an objective basis for the growth of a really socialistic society. Nothing should be allowed to be done from this side of the border which may help in subverting that basis. Even after all this is done, it may not be possible for India to keep up the close tie with Bangladesh in the midst of the strong play of rival power blocs in this area unless a strong communion of interest of the toiling people of both the countries in the struggle for establishing a society free from exploitation, in all senses of the term, is forged. On the extent it will be possible to develop this communion of interest through a struggle for the establishment of a society free from all forms of exploitation, will depend the ability of India and Bangladesh jointly to withstand the gigantic pressure of the rival power blocs to mould them according to their global strategy. However, there would be great obstacles in the building up of such communion of interests from the side of entrenched interests in both the countries. In combating any unsavoury influence of rival power blocks one is to reckon with these obstacles as well.

ALOO J. DASTUR AND USHA MEHTA

Bangladesh and the U.S.A.

WHEN INDIA worked for freedom against the British Government there was a lot of sympathy and understanding forthcoming from America. Several individuals made the cause of Indian freedom their own, defending and encouraging the right to independence, by speech and writing. During the Second World War, President F. D. Roosevelt urged Prime Minister Winston Churchill to recognize and concede to a sullen India the core or substance of independence so that it could contribute handsomely towards the Allies' war effort. And the Indian nationalism appreciated the American attitude and gesture with gratitude.

When India did attain statehood on 15 August 1947 it almost immediately became a victim of the politics of the cold war. America and Soviet Russia had moved away from each other and vied for the leadership of the world. With independence, Jawaharlal Nehru declared that India would not be a party to the cold war but would judge world issues on their merit—in short, India would be non-aligned. This, in American eyes, was India's original sin. We refused to see the world divided into white and black : rather we saw in it varying shades of grey. For such impertinence we were punished through the United Nations where we took the first Pakistani aggression in Kashmir almost at our birth. The international organization, then led by the U.S.A., refused to see the aggression as it was and came to equate the aggressor with the victim of aggression. Our requests for economic and technical aid, even the Wheat Loan, all got bogged down in this controversy.

ANTI-COMMUNISM

America's single-minded devotion in the fifties, first to crush communism and later to contain it, did not find a corresponding response in our foreign policy, and we steadfastly refused to be drawn in the anti-communist military alliances. In 1954 the cold war came to our doors when Pakistan joined the U.S.A. in a bilateral military pact and also became a member of the Baghdad Pact, now known as CENTO; later it joined the SEATO. To put the record straight, America believed that Pakistan was going to join the anti-communist fold; but Pakistan's Governor-General and Prime Minister both declared that Pakistan had only *one* enemy and that was India. To assuage India's concern and resentment, President Eisenhower wrote to Nehru that it was up to him to see that America's gifted weapons were not used against India—a promise more easily made than broken. In May 1965 when we first produced proof that Pakistan had used American tanks in the Rann of Cutch to attack our outposts, Washington turned a deaf ear to our plea. This was encouragement enough to our neighbour that its benefactor would not mind if it launched a full-scale attack on us with the American weapons. And so it did a few months later. No protest or objection was forthcoming and an American President's pledged word was not honoured. Once again both India and Pakistan were put on par and asked to end hostilities. Public opinion in our country was sore at the American attitude but once the war was over, somehow the resentment was papered over.

BANGLADESH ERUPTS

It is, however, since the eruption of Bangladesh that there has been a continuously widening gap between Indian opinion, official and non-official, and the American administration. Between 7 December 1970 and 25 March 1971 it continued to be a domestic matter although the issues involved were of great constitutional and democratic import. The democratic world looked on in amazement at the nonchalance, even indifference, with which the Pakistani President, aided and abetted by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, set aside the will of the people of East Pakistan as expressed in the first free election held in the country by adult franchise. The Awami League of Mujibur Rahman won 160 of the 162 seats in East Pakistan—an all-time world record—and thus secured a majority of seats in the National Assembly, obtaining the democratic privilege, nay right, to constitute the government. On the pretext of talking, Yahya Khan bought time to transfer troops from West Pakistan and on the night of 25 March as he flew out of Dacca and Bhutto had

himself smuggled out. Mujibur Rahman was arrested and the army started on its 9-month long orgy of murder, rape and loot.

This action converted a domestic issue into an international one. The trek of helpless men, women and children started to India in ever-increasing number bearing tales of man's inhumanity to man rivalling the Nazi butchery of the thirties. Under the rising mountains of corpses, East Pakistan was buried and Bangladesh was born. The world press has borne testimony to the mass slaughter of intellectuals and artists, men and boys, even women and children. Millions the world over saw on their T.V. sets the brutalities perpetrated by Yahya Khan's armed hordes over a people who merely exercised their right to vote. Here was the military dictatorship nullifying a democratic act. In the process it tortured to death more than a million people and squeezed out in less than 6 months more than 9 millions of people to find temporary shelter in India.

From the start our Prime Minister while providing shelter and relief took up the correct position that a political solution had to be found to enable the refugees to return to their own homes; she further stated that the refugee problem was not India's problem; it was an international responsibility. Those who came were not our citizens to be absorbed in our body politic. India appealed to the conscience of the world and the world responded to a degree. Governments and private organizations gave help. Even the United Nations made a desultory effort to help the refugees. Pakistan all the time protested that it was an internal affair of a sovereign State and none had the right to interfere. On this plea the International Red Cross and the United Nations' efforts for helping the refugees came to be thwarted as the Pakistani Government insisted on all relief being directed only through Government agencies.

AMERICAN EQUIVOCATION

America's position from the beginning was one of equivocation. While the press and public were deeply exercised over the atrocities, the President and the State Department took a cautious, neutral attitude, and this despite the well-known fact that West Pakistan was using American military equipment to crush the urge for freedom in Bangladesh. Rather, an official explanation was forthcoming from Washington that military hardware given free by America could be used for maintaining internal security and national integrity. With American acquiescence what was given for use against external communist aggression came to be used first in attacking India and later to crush its own people.

In the beginning of the freedom struggle in Bangladesh, America attempted to keep its options open by not antagonizing either the Pak military junta or an independent Bangladesh as and when it came into being. But this pose was not maintained long. As the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Christian Science Monitor* exposed the wanton killing of civilians, official sources maintained silence. When the news about the horrors of the genocide reached a wider public, the Senators began to take note of the Government's calculated silence and called on the administration to cut off military aid to Pakistan. As Edward Kennedy put it :

The situation in East Pakistan should be particularly distressing to Americans. It is our military hardware, our guns, tanks, and aircraft which are contributing much to the sufferings and this is being done in violation of negotiated agreements on the use of military aids to the Central Government of Pakistan.

The U.S. Consul-General at Dacca submitted early a report on the widespread killing by the army. Instead of acting on this, the administration succumbed to Pakistani threats that it would cut off the direct wireless links between Washington and the Dacca Consulate and would not guarantee the safety of American nationals in Bangladesh. In its turn America rather warned India that the U.S. "would not like it" if India went beyond expressing sympathy and got involved in an "internal matter" of Pakistan. It showed no concern for the civilian population wounded in the conflict. Nor did it condemn the massacre of the innocents. It is only after Russia had taken the strongest objection to the killings, did the State Department admit that

... normal life in East Pakistan had been seriously disrupted
... it is increasingly clear that there have been substantial casualties.

and express its willingness to "assist in any international humanitarian effort" to alleviate the miseries of the Bengalis.

Pressed from all sides, by Senators and Representatives, by the exposures in the press and on the television, the administration had perforce to take note of the horrors. About mid-April, the Secretary of State Rogers agreed to withhold signing new aid agreements with Pakistan but decided to continue with shipments already in the pipe line. This was interpreted as the beginning of an economic squeeze.

It was nothing of the sort. By mid-June the American Government made its position quite clear that while it desired a political settlement it also wanted to maintain the territorial integrity of Pakistan. It almost hinted that it would help in every manner possible to make the military junta tide over its difficulties. The hope entertained in India that a continually deteriorating economic situation would compel the

Yahya regime to come to a settlement with the Awami League receded into the background. The American Government maintained a double posture—it gave aid for the refugees but also sustained and nourished the oppressors. Its desire and willingness to continue with economic assistance were thwarted by the Pakistan Aid Consortium towards the end of June; the Consortium rightly believed that no parts of the aid would be utilized for the millions in Bangladesh; on the contrary it would give the army greater power in the conduct of the mass killings.

MILITARY AID CONTINUED

Nixon administration's pro-Pakistani stance can be easily understood when we remember that this was just the time when it sought to reverse a quarter of a century old policy towards China and seek a rapprochement with the world's largest communist country. And Pakistan played the go-between. It was from Pakistan that Kissinger took off on his secret flight to China in late July. Against this backdrop the policy stands out clearly; and as is the way of all middlemen, Pakistan demanded and received its price—the continued flow of military aid. America's public posture was that it had stopped all military aid to the trigger-happy men of Islamabad and that it was trying to persuade Yahya Khan and his military regime to stop military action, restore normalcy and reach political accommodation with the leaders of Bangladesh. Our country almost accepted this till the American press disclosed to a shocked world that secretly America was loading five ships bound for Pakistan with military hardware and spare parts. This disclosure sent a wave of shock and horror not only through India but also through America. The democratic Government of the U.S.A. stood forth as aiding and abetting a military regime to carry on its months-old carnage against its own people. It was neither ashamed of its prevarication nor repentant of its share in the mass murder.

India during the same period had to function on many fronts: it had to care for the ever increasing number of refugees, appeal to the conscience of the world, gear up its defences against constant threats of war from across the western frontier and find a fitting reply to the newly constituted Washington-Islamabad-Peking axis. In 1954, when Nixon was Vice-President, America brought the cold war to our frontiers; in 1971, Nixon as President brought the possibilities of war close to our borders and that at a time of great strain and tension, India's immediate reply was "the pact of peace, friendship and co-operation" with Soviet Russia signed on a date of hallowed memory in modern Indian history, 9 August. While India rejoiced without much dissent at this master-stroke of diplomacy, America for the first time took this country into

its consideration. There was consternation in the State Department and reprimand from the administration. Had India given up its policy of non-alignment? How could India with its past professions and practices link itself with a super power? In American official eyes Pakistan could do no wrong, India could do no right.

BATTLE LINES DRAWN

Events began to move rapidly thereafter. The two sides had drawn their lines; the super powers had picked up their running mates. Subterfuge by America came to be exposed by the American press and/or leading Senators. America's earlier explanation of the continued flow of military equipment to Pakistan was that no new contracts had been signed since 25 March but that it was merely sending what was already in the pipe-line. That mask was torn asunder when Edward Kennedy disclosed at an open Senate Committee hearing that *even* two new contracts had been signed for bombers, fighters, reconnaissance and transport planes and minesweepers. This disclosure brought forth knowledge of several other such deals. The credibility of the Nixon administration touched a new low ebb. It was strange, it was incomprehensible how a democratic Government could possibly sustain and nourish a cruel military dictatorship which did not respect the results of a free election.

The U.S.A. surprised its friends and shocked its enemies when the Secretary of State, William Rogers, pleaded in September with the Senate Sub-Committee for Foreign Aid Appropriations that the country's aid funds to Pakistan should not be cut; the reason was simple: he had asked, rather urged, the rulers in Islamabad to create "political understanding and conditions where development aid could be used meaningfully." Somehow there was not much rapport between him and the sceptical sub-committee. To carry conviction to its members he suggested that America would "work purposefully" towards the reconstruction of East Pakistan once a political solution was achieved. And when compelled by the Senate also that aid should be withheld the Government used other devious ways and methods to circumvent the ban; it pleaded forgetfulness or negligence; it laid the blame on junior bureaucrats who did not carry out orders; it ignored the use of boats lent to Pakistan for cyclone relief for transport of the army and arms since it had no information *of its own*. It made just a show of its "concern" for the barbarity in Bangladesh in order to appease a shocked U.S. press, the public and the Congress; it never had the desire to put pressure on Islamabad to halt the butchery.

DIFFERING APPROACHES

India and America again differed on the political solution of the problem. While our country wanted and worked for a political settlement between West Pakistan and Bangladesh leaders that would pave the way for the return of the refugees on our soil, America began to exert influence and pressure on the Bangladesh leaders to take a realistic view of the situation and settle their differences with West Pakistan to maintain the territorial integrity of the country. This naturally implied the continued stationing of the hated West Pakistani army in Bangladesh. America feared that its withdrawal would make for a political vacuum in which the "collaborators" should become victims of the wrath of the Mukti Bahini. Strange concern for traitors and murderers when it had shut its eyes to the slaughter of more than a million Bengalis!

On another front, too, the approaches of the two countries differed. India rightly projected the view that what happened in Bangladesh was a Pakistani affair and it came into the picture only because it was forced into caring for nearly ten million refugees. Yahya Khan and his military junta succeeded in a measure in projecting the issue as an India-Pakistani confrontation. His shrill cries against India were to scare the western allies that a war on the subcontinent was imminent. This effort at covering up the rivers of blood and mountains of corpses succeeded partially and temporarily when he won over his American patrons to his view that the United Nations should enter the scene of conflict and place its observers on both sides of the borders of Bangladesh. The American Government swallowed the bait and failed to understand why India did not accept such a 'reasonable' suggestion. It also was pleased that Yahya Khan announced an amnesty in Bangladesh and called on the refugees to return to their homes. He went a little further and appointed a civilian governor and held sham elections to fill seats 'vacated' by the members of the Awami League—55 members were 'elected' unopposed. Sm. Gandhi rightly termed this as 'an attempt to establish phantom Governments and legislatures'; for Nixon and his advisers this was a move in the right direction for resolving the crisis. But at no stage did they call on the men in Islamabad to come to terms with the elected representatives of Bangladesh; on the contrary they continued by all underhand means to support and strengthen the cruel military clique that sought to subjugate the Bengalis.

There was chagrin in Washington at India's intransigence when the State Department and the Pentagon realized that New Delhi resisted all lures to sabotage the Bengali revolt against an oppressive regime. The U.S. attitude was that passions were at a high pitch and the *Washington Post* stated in early November

the United States takes the view that the explosive situation on the Indian subcontinent must be 'defused' before a political settlement can be achieved. U.S. officials believe that India has the capacity to contribute to a reduction of tensions in the region.

American policy-makers also had their grievances against India's open and declared support to the Mukti Bahini and refuge not only to the millions that came pouring in but also to the Bangladesh Government. As the *New York Times* put it, the 'American planners' hoped that with India's co-operation they could probably help to negotiate a fair degree of autonomy for the eastern half of Pakistan from the long dominant western section. Over the years, they say, this might even evolve into independence or at least a considerable weakening of the joint Pakistani state. But...high passions in New Delhi make such even-handedness appear cold and hostile.

Could India possibly accept that the American posture was even-handed? By word of mouth and action—both open and devious—Washington over nine months of agony and cruelty had supported the military rulers of Pakistan, helped them to try and ruthlessly crush a freedom movement and now blamed India for not falling in line with its nefarious designs. It wanted India to cajole or force the Bangladesh leaders into accepting a sham autonomy in a united Pakistan. Evidently it had run out of ideas. It appeared to believe that if Bangladesh became free there would be a spate of secessionist movements all over the subcontinent. The good old discredited 'domino theory' still held the field. Another apprehension was expressed that the two Bengals may desire to join up—a suggestion which cannot be taken seriously.

SM. GANDHI'S VISIT

On the eve of Sm. Gandhi's visit, the U.S. informed her of its decision to revoke licenses for the export of military equipment to Pakistan. Did this augur well for the Prime Minister's personal talks and diplomacy at the highest level? The very first day revealed that there was to be no meeting of minds. Both in his welcome speech and at his banquet the President talked of the 'sunshine of Indo-American friendship' and the 'special relationship' between the greatest and the largest democracies. He sympathized with her on the miseries caused by the cyclone in Orissa. But there was studied silence on what was uppermost in every mind. When Nixon sought to ignore and bypass the main issue, Indira Gandhi stressed it in a forthright and dignified manner. When he talked of Orissa she reminded him of the 'terrible

'man-made' tragedy and how she was tormented by the faces of millions of 'helpless victims of mediaeval tyranny'. When he called for peace she underlined that she could not 'avoid the responsibility or my duty to safeguard the future of my people'. There was no response forthcoming to her poignant plea :

Our people cannot understand how it is that we who are the victims, we who are bearing the burdens and restraining ourselves with such fortitude should be equated with those whose actions have caused that tragedy.

That no rapport was established was obvious but the chasm that divided the two seemed to widen after the Prime Minister's visit. While the American Government's policy was 'to preserve the territorial integrity of Pakistan' at all cost, the Indian Government could not possibly go along with it knowing as it did the mind of the Bangladesh leaders. The *New York Times* pithily summed up the situation consequent on Sm. Gandhi's visit :

Mrs Gandhi seemed to be implying that the eastern wing of Pakistan with 70 million people of Bengali stock... never again would willingly accept the rule of the West Pakistan military Junta headed by President Yahya Khan. This also is the opinion increasingly discernible here among junior and middle grade officials in close touch with the continuing campaign of repression that the Pakistan army has been waging for seven months against all in East Pakistan—Muslims and Hindus alike—who are suspected of favouring Bangladesh or East Bengali independence. If senior policy makers, President Nixon, Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State Rogers, and Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco share this appreciation however, it is not evident.

ESCALATION AND WAR

Sm. Gandhi's three-week tour of western countries was a bold venture when strident sounds emanated from West Pakistan threatening a *jehad*. India kept cool, and world leaders were informed of the threat to peace. At this critical period, the U.N. came to expose its impotence. U Thant offered his good services to de-escalate the situation ; India assured him of support if only he would see that the declared wishes of the people of Bangladesh were respected. This country had no wish to go to war with Pakistan in spite of all its efforts to transform its loosened hold on its own territory into an armed confrontation with India. When it moved its army to our frontiers, so did we to keep ourselves prepared for all eventualities. There was a 'crush and con-

quer India' campaign. With mounting tension, India also flexed its muscles and took action against intruding Pakistani fighters and armour in Bangladesh. This was a clear notice to the world and powers friendly to Pakistan that this country was determined to react sharply to any Pakistani military adventure either in the east or in the west. It was also determined not to allow any international agency including the U.N. to interfere or intercede in a war forced on its neighbour. Harrassed by the Mukti Bahini in Bangladesh, and confronted with India's unity of purpose, the Pak military junta was blinded by its own ineffectualness. Its reliance on its friends in the west and east was no longer a matter of comfort. Its policy since 25 March of crushing the freedom movement in its erstwhile eastern province and at the same time humiliating India lay shattered. It threatened war with an eye on the big powers compelling India to come to terms. When even this failed, on 3 December it launched an aerial *blitzkrieg* on eight Indian airfields. As a commentator put it, 'It started like Israel but ended like Egypt'.

MASK OF AMERICA

India retaliated massively in the west and its armies entered Bangladesh. It was war and Yahya Khan had stated that it was to be Pakistan's last war with India. Pakistan knew, the world knew, that Pakistan attacked first. Only America did not. Its ambassador at the U.N. moved the Security Council, abused India as aggressor and called for an immediate halt to the fighting. Was there even a word of reprimand for its protege? Soviet Russia used its veto, Britain and France abstained, but the U.S.A. and its new friend and ally led small states in condemning India. Failing more than once in the Security Council, America took the issue to the General Assembly under the Uniting for Peace Resolution. Ironically, China again supported its new-found ally; but their proud boast was that 104 states of the world had joined them in calling a halt to hostilities. Soviet Russia voted with India and nine others against the motion and once again Britain and France abstained. Here was a war we had sought to avoid; it was forced on us by the first blow from the Pakistani planes. National interest and respect for human freedom demanded that we shed our blood because freedom is indivisible. America was concerned, America was surprised that Pakistan was soon on the losing side.

American and Chinese armour—America's finest aircraft—paid a heavy toll. India's comparatively humble war machine broke the backbone of Pakistan's attack. There was chagrin and consternation in the White House and the State Department. In the twinkling of an

eye came the not so unexpected announcement that all economic aid to India was stopped. From private but authentic sources leaked out the information that America had allowed third parties like Turkey and Iran and Jordan to send arms and planes to replenish the lost and destroyed military hardware in Pakistan. Reports had it that even from Viet Nam military help was forthcoming to bolster up the sagging morale of the Pakistani units in Bangladesh. There was nothing secret or secretive in the Seventh Fleet being ordered into the Bay of Bengal. To what purpose? To scare the Indian Government and people? To pin down the 'mini' Indian navy so that it may not perform its duty in a war? To give heart to a defeated military junta? To evacuate a dozen and more Americans? The answers were not forthcoming immediately. One thing, however, was clear as the Indian sunshine—the American Government cut a ridiculous figure in the world. There could have been nothing more inane and inconsequential than a nuclear-powered naval task force in the Bay of Bengal on the penultimate day of a short and sharp war. The *Enterprise* could not prevent the abject surrender of the Pakistani army of occupation in Bangladesh.

The earlier pose that America had assumed of being neutral if war broke out was totally surrendered. America had once again come out on the side of a brutal military dictatorship. This was in keeping with its policy since 1945. In the past, its support was to sustain discredited leaders lest communism take over. On this occasion, it could not take shelter under any such specious plea. It sought to throttle at birth an infant State whose only fault was that its people, down-trodden and ill-used, ultimately tortured and persecuted, had the temerity to vote for freedom and die for freedom. The tragedy is that the government of a country whose rallying cry once was 'no taxation without representation,' who fought a war of independence and won, should have done its worst to egg on cruel military rulers to indulge in the atrocities on their own suppressed people; and when defeated in that purpose should turn its wrath, malice and enmity towards another democratic country which believes that the right to freedom is inalienable. While the small men of Islamabad have licked the dust, then the man in the White House has reddened his hands and those of his advisers and administration with the blood of Bengali martyrs who loved liberty more than life and of Indian officers and jawans who gave their lives so that liberty shall not perish from this subcontinent.

JAYANTA KUMAR RAY

The United States and Bangladesh

THE POLICIES, actions and postures of the United States administration towards Bangladesh from March 1971 to December 1971 will form the subjectmatter of this essay.

The incomparable success of the civil disobedience movement launched by the Awami League under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in March 1971, can be viewed as a confirmation of the popular support behind this party. The election results of December 1970, and the pogrom launched by the military-dominated ruling group in Pakistan on 25 March 1971, left no doubt about the legitimacy of the Provisional Government of Bangladesh formed in the middle of April 1971. The basic policy of the United States Government, however, appeared to be to preserve the territorial integrity of Pakistan ruled by General Yahya Khan and his aides, and to continue to provide economic and military support to Pakistan, openly or secretly. A policy is expected to be based on realities, political and moral. It is the large deviation of American policy from these realities that has provoked widespread criticism in Bangladesh, India, and the United States. The means adopted by the United States administration to ensure this deviation ranged from the vile to the stupid. A point to be emphasized is that the administration did not blunder into any of the measures it chose to implement its policy—however, senseless some of these measures might be deemed by outsiders. They conformed to the general pattern of relations between the governments of the United States and Pakistan evolving since the middle fifties. Failures sometimes converted what was essentially cynical into something silly.



The United States administration could not certainly be unaware that President Yahya Khan was attempting a military solution of the problem created by the results of the December 1970 elections. The problem was nothing short of a full-scale challenge to the ascendancy of the ruling circle headed by Yahya Khan. It arose out of the determination of the Awami League, holding majority of the seats in Pakistan's National Assembly, to liquidate this ascendancy and then put an end to the colonial style exploitation of East Pakistan by the ruling circle of West Pakistani bureaucrats (civilian and military) acting in close collaboration with the twenty-two top commercial industrial families of West Pakistan. That Yahya Khan was trying to explore an extra-parliamentary solution to the problem could be suspected when he put off the meeting of the National Assembly till 3 March 1971 without any valid reason. The suspicion was confirmed when on 1 March he indefinitely postponed the session of the Assembly. At that time there were about 35,000/45,000 West Pakistani troops in East Bengal, and, soon after the postponement of the National Assembly session, nearly 18,000 troops in West Pakistan were ordered to proceed to East Bengal.¹ In fact, even before the postponement was announced troops had started flying from the western wing to the east.²

Since the United States military establishment had close ties with the Pakistani military establishment, the meaning of this transfer of troops—especially at a time when the hijacking of an Indian aircraft to Lahore created enormous tension along West Pakistan's border with India could hardly be missed by the United States administration. Pakistan's rulers could not have weakened the defences in West Pakistan by transferring a large number of troops to the eastern wing but for a decision to wipe out the inconvenient verdict of the December 1970 elections by means of a ruthless military action. The same inference could be drawn from the dismissal of Vice-Admiral S. M. Ahsan (known to be sympathetic to the programmes of the Awami League) from the post of the Governor of East Pakistan on 1 March. Lt. General Tikka Khan was appointed as the Governor of East Pakistan, but the judges of the High Court of Dacca refused to administer the oath of office to him. As the judges, including the Chief Justice, demonstrated in this fashion their solidarity with the civil disobedience movement launched by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 4 March in response to Yahya's 1 March announcement, Tikka Khan was appointed as the Martial Law Administrator of East Pakistan (requiring no oath of office) with effect from 7 March 1971.

After the midnight of 25 March there could be no doubt about the intention of the Yahya regime to carry out a genocide for the purpose of destroying the verdict of the 1970 elections. Thanks to

the Anderson papers,³ it is now known that the United States Consulate in Dacca promptly apprised the authorities in Washington of the atrocities being committed by the West Pakistani army in Bangladesh. But the State Department feigned ignorance and refused to offer any comment on the atrocities. It thus proved itself to be blind to the humanitarian aspects of the problem created by the pogrom. As to the political aspects, the United States administration proved itself to be diabolically partisan. It dismissed the happenings in Bangladesh as an internal matter for the Government of Pakistan, although the non-elected leaders of this Government were committing genocide on the majority of the people of Pakistan living in the eastern wing. They wanted an end to military rule and colonial-style exploitation by military rulers. The United States administration also ignored the fact that the problem ceased to be an internal matter for the military rulers of Pakistan whose activities began to push thousands of refugees into India. "The phrase internal affair is overdone and this is not certainly a case of internal affair", said the United States Ambassador to India, Kenneth B. Keating, at a press conference in Bombay on 15 April, while commenting on the tragic events in East Bengal. Pakistan's protest against Keating's comment saw the State Department quite obliging. The State Department replied that Keating had no authority to make a statement on the matter. It repudiated Keating's remarks and stood by its earlier position that the events in East Bengal were an internal matter for Pakistan.⁴

As part of its rescue operation for Yahya Khan, the State Department suppressed a message from the American Consulate in Dacca, describing the massacre of unarmed civilians by West Pakistani troops and saying that American silence on this issue was likely to be interpreted as tacit approval. Senators asked the State Department for a copy of this message. But the State Department did not respond. This was disclosed by Senator Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on 30 April. Fulbright appeared to assess correctly the policy of the State Department as he said that the State Department was interested in minimizing the situation in East Bengal because "stability and support for the status quo is more to our interest than any upheaval".⁵

This was probably the least provocative characterization of a macabre policy that gradually unfolded many such components as treachery, duplicity, insensitivity to human suffering, blindness to political realities, and blunt adventurism, over a period of nine months (March-December 1971). Reports from Archer K. Blood, the American Consul-General in Dacca, gave details of the systematic killing of Bengali civilians, but these reports were condemned in Washington as alarmist. Employees at the American Consulate in Dacca drafted a petition criti-

cizing the State Department's silence on the slaughter. Blood sent the petition to Washington. The authorities in Washington did not favour Blood's activities which appeared to create inconveniences in the implementation of Washington's policy of ignoring the genocide and bolstering the Yahya regime. Early in June Blood was transferred to a position in Washington and his Dacca assignment was cut short by eighteen months.⁶ The displeasure of the Government of Pakistan could be plausibly deemed to be a factor linked up with this transfer.⁷

During 1954-1965 Pakistan received American weapons worth \$ 1.5 billion as gifts. These weapons, including guns, tanks and aircraft, were being used to carry out a systematic slaughter of Bengali civilians. This was a gross violation of the U.S.A.-Pakistan military aid agreement which permitted the use of these gifted weapons only against a Russian or Chinese threat.⁸ As early as 1 April 1971, Senator Edward Kennedy, a Democrat and Chairman of the Senate Judiciary sub-committee on Refugees, told the Senate that the Americans had a special responsibility in the matter of stopping the slaughter because American weapons were being used in carrying out the slaughter. At a press conference in New Delhi on 7 April, Senator William Saxbe, a Republican and a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, expressed distress over the use of American weapons in East Bengal. This was the time when newspapers in Great Britain and the United States had already published a number of editorials on, and first-hand accounts of, the pogrom in East Bengal⁹ involving the use of American weapons. The State Department, however, declared on 6 April that it had no first-hand report confirming the use of American weapons for suppressing the people of East Bengal. This was a calculated denial of facts bordering on a shameless lie. The State Department made it all quite transparent when it added that 'as a general proposition we would be concerned if American weapons were used in situations such as the one obtaining in East Bengal.'

Soon afterwards, another example of deliberate misrepresentation of facts by the State Department came to light. The outbreak of the Indo-Pak war in 1965 saw the United States put an embargo on the supply of lethal and non-lethal equipments to Pakistan (and India). In 1966 the United States decided to resume supplies of non-lethal items to Pakistan. On 13 April 1971, the State Department disclosed that the United States had been annually selling to Pakistan military items worth about \$ 10 million since 1967. Of these, approximately \$ 2.5 million related to ammunition, which could not certainly be regarded as non-lethal. Nor could the amount be dismissed as small. "Hitherto, the administration has insisted that only small amounts of 'non-lethal' military equipment have been furnished to Pakistan. They have described such supplies as military personnel carriers and communications equipment," commented the *New York Times*.¹⁰ The casualness of the State

Department in ignoring the distinction between lethal and non-lethal items certainly matched the nonchalance of West Pakistani soldiers in liquidating the intelligentsia in East Bengal and driving out to India thousands of refugees every day.

Early in May one could note a slight alteration in the State Department's view of the use of American weapons in East Bengal. In a letter to four Senators, who had asked the State Department for information on American aid to Pakistan, David Abshire, Under Secretary of State, stated: 'Reports which we have received indicate that M-24 tanks and F-86 aircraft have been observed in use in East Pakistan in recent weeks. The Department have expressed concern over the reported use of American weapons.' It is, however, significant, as Abshire noted, that the Department expressed its concern to the Pakistan Government 'privately'.¹¹ To express concern publicly might mean respect for humanitarian considerations, but it might hurt the sensibilities of those who were perpetrating genocide in East Bengal. A public expression was certainly called for because, at that time, the Government of Pakistan was refusing to allow the International Red Cross to send its representatives to East Bengal and organize medical relief and food supplies. Pakistani intransigence on this issue provoked a bipartisan group of ten Senators to draw up a statement urging the suspension of foreign exchange aid to Pakistan till the latter permitted the International Red Cross to function in East Bengal. These Senators sent a cable to Secretary of State William Rogers and urged the American Government to launch emergency relief programmes in East Bengal. The State Department, however, as Senator Kennedy complained, was busy suppressing telegrams from the Consulate in Dacca about 'indiscriminate killings, execution of students and dissident leaders, sufferings of millions, total disruption of Government services and threatened outbreak of epidemics.'¹²

On 6 May the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed a resolution calling for the suspension of all military assistance to Pakistan till the resolution of the conflict in East Bengal and the distribution of relief supplies there. The State Department, however, did not want to put an embargo on military sales to Pakistan, because an embargo would prompt Pakistan to obtain military supplies from other sources.¹³

The State Department favoured the position that the United States military sales to Pakistan were being kept under 'active review', while it had imposed a ban on deliveries of military equipment to Pakistan with effect from 25 March. In course of press briefings on 16 April, for the fourth time in course of a week, State Department spokesman Robert McCloskey pointed out that the American military sales to Pakistan were under review and that no arms were scheduled for delivery. In two months the world came to learn that 'review' stood for subterranean efforts towards delivering arms to Pakistan, which might or might not

be unearthed, and, if unearthed, explained away by ingenious phrasemongering.

On 16 April McCloskey made a few other important statements all of which were proved untrue in about nine weeks by disclosures in the *New York Times*. McCloskey said that the United States had not delivered to Pakistan lethal arms (including military vehicles and aircraft), the sale of which had been announced in October 1970 as 'one-time exception'. McCloskey assured newsmen that no arms were in the pipeline. *The New York Times* of June 21 disclosed that SS Sunderbans, a Pakistani ship, carrying arms for Pakistan, left New York on 8 May. The State Department licence for this ship's cargo mentioned 'parts and accessories for military vehicles.' This was corroborated by the ship's own manifests. The newspaper further reported that another Pakistani ship, SS Padma, would leave New York on 22 June. The dockside delivery listings indicated that SS Padma carried eight aircraft, 113 parachutes and parts, etc.¹⁴

McCloskey further stated on 6 April reiterating the State Department's earlier stand that since 1967 the United States had only been supplying to Pakistan such non-lethal items as medical-transport-communications equipment. The quantity, according to him, was 'modest', valued at about \$ 10 million a year. SS Sunderbans and SS Padma carried many items which were not the non-lethal ones mentioned by McCloskey. Moreover, the quantitative estimates provided by McCloskey appeared to be far short of actual supplies. For example, *The New York Times* noted that between 1967 and 30 April 1970 the United States Air Force alone gave commitments to Pakistan for the supply of military equipment worth \$ 47, 944, 761. 76. The army and navy of the United States were also likely to make further arms sales to Pakistan during this period.¹⁵

The extreme secretiveness with which the State Department carried out the transactions in respect of cargoes on SS Sunderbans and SS Padma could not but raise suspicions about the State Department's intentions and activities. Senator Frank Church wrote a letter to the State Department and requested information on State Department licences related to the aforesaid cargoes. The Department did not reply. Moreover, documents showed a number of items described as 'skids' and 'boxes' — this was certainly an instance of planned deception. One would suspect such deceptions would accompany moves to violate secretly the ban on arms delivery to Pakistan imposed on 25 March. This suspicion was confirmed when it was disclosed that on 31 March and 6 April two new licences were issued, permitting export to Pakistan of military equipment with a token value of \$ 9000. On 24 June a State Department spokesman took shelter behind the plea that these two licences were issued while the administration took some time

to implement the 25 March decision to cut off licences for the supply of military equipment to Pakistan. It is, however, difficult to accept this plea because the State Department announced the decision to revoke these two new licences only after the affairs of SS Sunderbans and SS Padma came to light. It would not be unfair to assume that but for *The New York Times* disclosures and a fear of further disclosures these two new licences would not have been revoked. This assumption would be strengthened by the statement of the State Department spokesman on 24 June that he had no knowledge of whether any equipment under the new licences had been already shipped.¹⁶

American officials were found to be performing strange tricks in their attempts to deny the obvious, i.e., continuing military shipments to Pakistan. Frank Kellogg, Special Assistant to the United States Secretary of State, said on 22 June (when he was in India) that *The New York Times* report of shipments of American arms to Pakistan was not true. On the same day, however, a spokesman of the Pentagon, Jerry W. Friedheim, said not only that SS Padma was carrying military materials but that this shipment was legal. He added that some articles had passed into the hands of shippers before the March 25 ban was put into effect, and that there could be 'more in the pipeline'. Friedheim also pointed to another source of American arms Pakistan could easily tap. Pakistani officials could buy from American commercial firms those military articles which did not require export licence.¹⁷

The United States administration could display some humanitarian concern for the peoples' suffering in Bangladesh by removing the American arms from SS Padma. The United States could easily do it, and Senator Frank Church wrote to the Justice Department and to President Nixon, requesting the removal of American arms. But the State Department resorted to technicalities in defending the shipments of arms that could be used for genocide in Bangladesh. Influential American newspapers cited these shipments as a case of 'breach of faith'¹⁸ on the part of the United States administration, and of 'collusion'¹⁹ with the military rulers of Pakistan. But the State Department provided on 23 June an entirely unapologetic defence of military cargoes aboard SS Sunderbans and SS Padma. Its spokesman, Charles Bray, declared that the 25 March ban did not affect transactions prior to that date, including the aforesaid cargoes. To the people of Bangladesh facing a pogrom, this jugglery of words did not make much sense. Nor could they find any solace in Bray's observation that it was legally impossible for the United States to stop the delivery of these cargoes. According to a spokesman of the Government of Bangladesh (formed on 17 April) the supply of American arms to Pakistan was a 'stern blow to the bleeding people of Bangladesh'.²⁰ But the American officials continued to argue²¹ that an arms embargo on Pakistan 'will prevent a cons-

constructive dialogue with Pakistan'. The only visible result of the 'constructive dialogue' was that Yahya Khan, confident of American support, was continuing the pogrom, and, according to the *Time*, it was 'not likely in the foreseeable future' that 'about 1,500,000 terrified East Pakistanis' (who were refugees in India) would go back to their home country. The *Time* added that 'millions more' would seek refuge in India. Of course, the number of refugees was much larger than that reported by the *Time*. Frank Church told the Senate on 10 June that the number stood at 5,000,000.²²

The State Department did not appear to be perturbed by the fact that arms supplies to Pakistan constituted a violation of policy.²³ On the contrary, the Department proceeded to assure that it would continue to violate the policy. Probably it calculated that it would be less embarrassing to disclose other stories of this violation which have not been told by a newspaper than to comment on sudden revelations by newspapers. Thus, on 24 June, Charles Bray disclosed that a third ship, SS Kaukhali, had sailed from New York on 2 April with munitions for Pakistan. On 29 June, Bray stated that SS Kaptai, a Pakistani freighter, was loading, among other items, some military cargoes. It was "fair to assume," he added, "that military cargo will be loaded on four or five other Pakistani ships within the next month or two".²⁴

In regard to furnishing economic aid to Pakistan, again, the United States administration appeared to be violating the policy announced by itself. On 26th June, American officials in Washington stated that the United States would provide further economic aid to Pakistan when it was evident that Pakistan was able to receive and utilize the aid for the purpose of improving social conditions in the country.²⁵ In a few days, however, the United States decided to give Pakistan a foreign exchange grant of \$4.5 million for relief, rehabilitation in the cyclone-affected areas of East Bengal and an additional sum of \$1 million for the acquisition of coastal vessels. Moreover, according to the *Washington Evening Star*, the United States administration 'sympathetically received' Pakistan's request for 70 million as loan.²⁶ The United States administration thus appeared to be financing what *The Washington Evening Star* had described as 'the scorched earth policy, the wanton killing, the selective slaughter of Bengali leaders' and what the *Sunday Times* had described as 'crimes against justice and humanity' committed in East Bengal by Pakistan's military rulers.²⁷ This hypothesis could be confirmed by the following evidence. A report in the *Sunday Times* of 20 June made it quite clear that the military government in Dacca was carrying on 'a campaign of terror', and that this government was hardly interested in the work of rehabilitation. 'The problems of return for the six million refugees [in India] seem insuperable. In Dacca, Jessore, Rangpur, Ishurdi, Khulna and Chittagong, their houses and shops have been

taken over by non-Bengalis', said the *Sunday Times* report. In a despatch from Dacca on 26 June, Sydney H. Schanberg, the *New York Times* correspondent, wrote that the city was under military occupation and ruled by intimidation, terror and force, while the military rulers failed to revive an effective civil administration. Moreover, according to a report in *The Washington Post*, the joint mission of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which had recently visited East Bengal, had the impression that Pakistan was spending her depleted foreign exchange holdings on the procurement of military supplies from foreign countries, especially fighter aircraft and anti-submarine weapons systems.²⁸

The two Presidents—Richard Nixon and Yahya Khan—seemed to move in step. Nixon reportedly ruled out the cancellation of outstanding licences worth \$ 35 million for military supplies to Pakistan.²⁹ With all these arms in the pipeline,³⁰ Yahya felt emboldened to outline, in his address to the nation on 28 June, a plan to wreck the results of the 1970 election, and to destroy the Awami League. The plan also revealed Yahya's intention to disqualify a large number of elected legislators from membership of the National and Provincial Assemblies, to hold by-elections to fill up the vacant seats with henchmen, and deprive the National Assembly of the right to prepare the Constitution. A group of experts would prepare the Constitution. In his 28 June address, Yahya Khan levelled false charges against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his colleagues in the Awami League. According to this address, the non-co-operation movement launched in March was 'violent' and 'for over three weeks had let loose widespread loot, arson and killing,' and Mujib 'had two, preferably by trickery, and if this did not succeed, by physical already made up his mind that he was going to break the country into two, preferably by trickery, and if this did not succeed, by physical violence.' Obviously, Yahya was making a belated attempt to justify his army's brutality in East Bengal — an attempt that would find echoes in the repeatedly expressed concern of the Nixon administration for the preservation of Pakistan's unity.³¹

Testimonies of Anthony Mascarenhas and a UPI Correspondent produced below, may be deemed a sufficient refutation of the foregoing charges against Mujib and his followers. "The evidence has established four things", writes Mascarenhas. "First, the military action by West Pakistan preceded, not followed, the massacre of non-Bengali. Secondly, an 'imminent mutiny' of the Bengali servicemen, as some of us were made to believe, was not planned for 26 March and is therefore no justification for the professedly 'pre-emptive strike' the night before. Thirdly, the Nazi-style pogroms were intended, in the context of the ambitions of the present West Pakistani regime, as a military answer to what was essentially a political problem of its own

making. Fourth, the obliteration of Bengali language and culture is the continuing purpose of the regime."³² A UPI Correspondent — one of the six foreign journalists taken by the military authorities on escorted tour of East Bengal — quoted a foreign diplomat in Dacca as saying: "The army says there was a breakdown of the law and order while Sheikh Mujib ran things in March. That's not true. The Awami Leaguers had patrols out, they instructed the Bengalis not to kill or beat non-Bengalis and frankly I thought they were doing a pretty good job of things. Mujib may have been a bit tough in his demands on President Yahya but he was negotiating seriously and I don't think secession was on his mind. The Bengalis didn't start killing non-Bengalis until after March 25, when reports of the army killings in Dacca swept the country."³³

The United States administration went on trying various devices to bail the Yahya regime out of a crisis. The Secretary of State Rogers attempted to furnish a grant of \$70 million to Pakistan secretly. He was 'caught'. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee 'exposed' his attempt. Murray Kempton, an eminent television commentator, discussed this affair in a talk on 13 July for the Columbia Broadcasting System. Kempton also referred to clandestine arms shipments, and said: "Naturally no respectable person can hope to maintain a constructive political dialogue with a murderer if he has to stop selling him guns. So the USA sneaks that it can and prays that Pakistan can soon restore the peace of the grave to East Bengal..."³⁴

In another sphere, however, the secret moves of the administration proved successful. Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, according to information available with the International Monetary Fund, dropped from \$271 million on 1 January 1971 to \$108 million on 1 April 1971. Although there was no hard evidence of any rise in Pakistan's export earnings, the foreign exchange reserves rose to \$114 million in course of April 1971, and to \$133 million in May. Informed sources attributed this to assurances from the United States Government which prompted three American Exchange Banks to extend to Pakistan credit facilities that these Banks had previously suspended.³⁵

Senator Stuart Symington accused the United States administration of using ambiguous phrases to convey wrong impressions about the status of military shipments to Pakistan. "We have continued these shipments, not because we were powerless to stop them, but because we decided not to stop them," said Symington. He added that, "We have an embargo on military assistance that is not an embargo — although the executive branch continues to call it an embargo". The embargo does not apply to the so-called non-lethal items, ammunition and spare parts, or even to aircraft and armoured personnel carriers. "Nor has it covered \$100 million worth of military equipment purchased under

foreign military sales programmes or commercially", Symington affirmed. He said that \$15 million worth of military equipment for Pakistan were still in the pipeline.³⁶ On 24 July *The New York Times* also wrote that according to estimates privately offered by State Department officials, arms worth about \$15 million were in the hands of Pakistani officials in the United States.

It was reported that American grain ships, proceeding towards Chittagong, were diverted to Karachi, and they were used to ferry West Pakistani soldiers to East Bengal. Senator Tuney raised this issue in the Senate.³⁷ Congressional sources informed *The New York Times* that "they had evidence that plans were being drawn to have US teams to help the Pakistani army suppress Bengali resistance in East Bengal."³⁸ Robert Jackson, a police expert, who had earlier been associated with training missions in Vietnam, dealing with counter-insurgency programmes, returned to Dacca, although he had left Dacca after the military action of 25 March.

In an interview to Neville Maxwell of *The Financial Times*, President Yahya Khan threatened India with 'a general war'.³⁹ The State Department did not find it proper to censure Yahya Khan on this issue. But it seized upon reports that Yahya was prepared to permit United Nations observers to supervise the return of refugees from India. The State Department expressed pleasure⁴⁰ at these reports, forgetting that, the official statement of the Yahya regime, issued in the last week of May, raised little hope of repatriation of refugees. According to this official statement, 'all genuine Pakistanis' would be accepted back 'after routine checks to ensure their Pakistani nationality'.⁴¹ But these refugees did not have passports to prove their Pakistani nationality. Many of them — illiterate peasants — could not even conceive of such documents.

It is interesting to note the report that gave Henry A Kissinger, President Nixon's National Security Adviser, the credit for persuading Yahya Khan to agree to the posting of the United Nations observers for facilitating the return of refugees.⁴² If correct, this report would provide another instance of how much the United States was preoccupied with helping Yahya out of a messy situation. The stationing of UN observers could seriously impede the operations of resistance fighters trying to build up sanctuaries across the border. At that time Yahya's army faced mounting pressure from resistance groups, as acknowledged by independent observers.⁴³ The United States might be exploring means of easing this pressure.

It is also interesting to note how the United States administration treated the field-study report submitted by the ten-man team (headed by Peter Cargill) of World Bank experts who visited twelve of the nineteen administrative districts of East Bengal (from 30 May to 11 June). The

official report of the team — as distinguished from individual reports of different members of the team — was despatched to the World Bank's Directors on 9 July. The individual reports gave graphic and authoritative accounts of army brutality. Hendrik Van der Heijden's report (which was regarded by knowledgeable circles to be the most important of the various field reports) on a trip to Kusthia says that the army's 'punitive action' 'lasted 12 days and left Kusthia virtually deserted and destroyed. The population was down from 40,000 to 5,000. Ninety per cent of the houses, shops, banks and other buildings were totally destroyed. The city looked like a WW II German town having undergone strategic bombing attacks. People were sitting around dazed. When we moved around, everyone fled. It was like the morning after a nuclear attack. I was the first foreigner to come to Kusthia after the Army moved in. The people were terrified and still shocked. "Kusthia, as someone told me, is the My Lai of the West Pakistan Army. There was only one reaction: to confirm that impression."⁴⁴ The official report of the team was said to be a considerably edited and sanitised version of the original report. The aim of editing was to cause as little of offence to Islamabad as possible.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the official report did not fail to point out that 'it is most unlikely that any significant movement in the direction of normality will occur until there is a drastic reduction in the visibility — and preferably, even the presence — of the military'. The report added 'that the development effort will have to remain in a state of suspension for at least the next year or so'.⁴⁶

The United States administration reportedly pressured the World Bank to keep this report secret. Copies of the report were circulated among the Bank's Directors only after it was known that the strategy of suppression had failed and that the *Washington Post* had decided to publicize the story of suppression.⁴⁷

The World Bank report calling for the suspension of international development efforts in Pakistan was published in *The New York Times*. Almost simultaneously came the State Department announcement of 14 July that economic and technical assistance (excluding humanitarian assistance) to Pakistan would remain withheld till Pakistan provided a new list of development projects taking into account the current situation in East Bengal.⁴⁸ The pro-Yahya posture of the Nixon administration was revealed on the same day (14 July) when Roger P. Davies, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, testifying before the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, said that circumstances, producing high casualties among the army and civilians in East Bengal, and causing an exodus of six-to-seven millions of refugees to India, 'are still not very clear'.⁴⁹ Feigning ignorance was probably regarded as a subtle way of avoiding any criticism of the Yahya regime.

The Nixon administration's pro-Yahya activities and postures

persisted throughout the period March-December 1971 (which is under review in this paper). They reached an ignoble climax at about the time Yahya Khan launched a full-scale surprise attack on India. As the Anderson papers have revealed, Nixon not only wanted to tilt in favour of Pakistan, but explore ways and means of transferring American arms from third countries (e.g., Jordan) to Pakistan. Warnings by some officials that this transfer would be contrary to American legislation did not deter either Nixon or Kissinger.⁵⁰ In case the transfer could not be arranged, the Nixon-Kissinger formula dictated, no step should be taken to reduce the pressure on India by indicating that such transfers were not expected to take place.⁵¹ According to latest reports, on 14 December (two days before the Pakistani surrender), Jordan sent ten F-104s to Pakistan. On 23 February 1972, American officials refused to confirm or deny these reports, adding that restrictions on such transfers (imposed by the United States) were not always heeded by recipients of American arms.⁵² No more hint was necessary to underline the fact that the American administration would silently tolerate such impermissible transfers.

The Nixon administration claimed a sudden concern for stopping bloodshed at the outbreak of war.⁵³ This concern could not have been based on humanitarian considerations, because the same administration had not only ignored a nine-month old genocide causing far heavier bloodshed but also supplied weapons used in carrying out the genocide. Moreover, the claim of an interest in the stoppage of killings in the war stood contradicted by the despatch of a Seventh Fleet Task Force with orders to attack forces liberating Bangladesh.⁵⁴ This claim also lay countered by the report that the United States administration delayed the transmission of surrender message from the Pakistani authorities to the Indian authorities.⁵⁵ The sending of the Task Force to the Bay of Bengal was discussed at the White House strategy sessions as a show of force.⁵⁶ The official statement linking the evacuation of American citizens in Bangladesh to the movement of the Task Force was patently absurd, because all those who wanted evacuation had been already evacuated by the Bangladesh and Indian forces. Presumably, it was meant to be a pressure on India, opening the possibility of diversion⁵⁷ of the allied forces of Bangladesh and India from their main objective, i.e., defeating the occupation army of Pakistan. The despatch of the Task Force also served as an encouragement to Pakistan troops, whose morale, battered by genocide and guerrilla successes, was extremely low. The movement of the Task Force could thus be regarded as being designed to prolong the conflict and increase bloodshed. It is plausible to argue that Nixon eventually decided not to use the Task Force for outright aggression on account of the following factors. First, in an election year, he did

not want to alienate American public opinion by launching hostilities opposed to the prevailing anti-war mood of the American people, and thereby injure his chances for re-election to the Presidency. Second, the determination of India and its friends made another Vietnam-style adventure carry much bigger risks than Nixon was prepared to undertake.

Disclosures (by Jack Anderson) of the minutes of the White House strategy sessions on the Indo-Bangla-Pak war have caused a serious jolt to many Americans not because they have unearthed anything previously unknown but because they have supplied irrefutable evidence for what the United States administration has long been suspected of, namely, its determination to back the ruling circle of bureaucrats in Pakistan in spite of the latter's preference for a genocide to upset the unfavourable electoral verdict of 1970. The disclosures are important not because they have revealed the bias of the Nixon administration — it was too glaring to be missed — but because they have made it impossible for this administration to resort to any double-talk and self-righteous insinuations on this issue. Moreover, many Americans must have been worried by the behaviour of what has been characterized as 'the imperial Presidency'.⁵⁸ The difference between the Cabinet and Presidential forms of government must also have disturbed their minds. No Prime Minister in a Cabinet form of government would dare flout public opinion (as reflected in newspapers and the legislatures) in the way President Nixon did, and thereby risk the loss of his job in an adverse vote. In a Cabinet form of government, the veto 59 of the House of Representatives on aid to Pakistan, this aid being recommended by President Nixon with extraordinary earnestness, would be regarded as an unambiguous vote of no-confidence and the Prime Minister would be obliged to quit. Nixon, however, pricked the vanity of Americans as freedom lovers while he violated public opinion and offered relentless support to the perpetrators of pogrom in Bangladesh.

In a mood of critical self-examination some leading American commentators have tried to minimize the importance of the confidential (but leaked) papers on the White House strategy sessions, or to offer ingenious interpretations of these papers. What they fail to achieve is the goal of explaining away the Nixon administration's policy of support towards Pakistan, a policy which has morally repelled⁶⁰ the majority of Americans on account of Pakistan's commitment to genocide and has caused a sense of political humiliation by aligning the mighty United States with a defeated Pakistan.

It has been argued, for instance, that the Anderson papers are 'fragmentary'⁶¹ and that, unlike the Pentagon Papers, they do not explain the bases and motivations of American foreign policy in its proper perspective. This criticism is partially irrelevant. It is more

important and relevant—at least for such countries as Bangladesh and India—to note what the Anderson papers reveal than to deplore what they do not reveal. These papers vividly depict the strength of the alliance between the military-industrial complexes of the United States and Pakistan. Fragmentary or not, they carry, therefore, a significant message for, at least, the two countries vitally affected by this alliance—Bangladesh and India.

Again, it has been argued that Nixon's tilt towards Pakistan is, in fact, a tilt towards China.⁶² Nixon wants to cultivate good relations with China. Pakistan is friendly with China. To support Pakistan is to please China. Therefore, Nixon has supported Pakistan. This argument draws additional strength from Pakistan being the springboard for Kissinger's secret air-dash to China in July 1971.⁶³ This argument overlooks a number of important facts. China's interest in bettering relations with the United States hardly depends on America's friendship with Pakistan. It stems from China's currently perceived threat from the Soviet Union—a threat that can be measured by the stationing of 45 Soviet divisions⁶⁴ along the border with China, and by the construction in the majority of China's large and medium cities, including Peking, of vast underground shelters.⁶⁵ American and Chinese representatives have had 136 meetings in Geneva and Warsaw from 1955 to April 1971.⁶⁶ The United States, having a large number of allies throughout the globe, could arrange take-off points for Kissinger's trip to China in countries other than Pakistan. It is plausible to speculate that the United States chose to locate the staging point in Pakistan because of its concern to make Pakistan capture the imagination of the American public, and thus to diminish the odium of the administration's special ties with a military Government postponing by means of a pogrom the inauguration of democratic rule by civilians.

Another suggestion, aimed at pointing the United States policy as what it is not, stresses President Nixon's personal preference as the key ingredient in this policy.⁶⁷ Such a suggestion, perhaps unwillingly, offers the most severe indictment of American policy. Compared to other countries, the United States spends by far the largest amount on research and intelligence collection geared to policy-making. To emphasize that President Nixon acted out of personal pique, out of admiration for President Yahya Khan and coolness towards Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, is to debunk the entire process of policy-making and to portray policy-makers as utterly irresponsible. Moreover, shrewd supporters of Nixon should wonder whether it is honourable for Nixon to be known as an admirer of Yahya who can demean himself by referring to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as one of the many criminals in a country, and to the Prime Minister of a neighbouring country 'as neither a woman nor a head of state'.⁶⁸ Moreover, to admit policy-making as

being influenced by an admiration for Yahya is also to admit an acute poverty of political judgement. After all, Yahya is that head of a state who said as late as November 1971 that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would be condemned and killed by his own people in case he returned to Bangladesh.⁶⁹

The hard fact that commentators, seeking to explain away the failures, the mindlessness and mercilessness of a government policy, have to face is that Nixon's personal preference has a deep institutional root. He is the chief executive of a military-industrial complex that has built up close ties with its counterpart in Pakistan by free gifts of arms and ammunition. A policy of continuous innovations in the technology of military production, backed by a few industrial firms bagging enormous defence contracts every year⁷⁰ and acquiring a vested interest in this policy, leaves a gigantic surplus of obsolete or near-obsolete military hardware. Surplus military stores can be traded for profit or influence or both. Bureaucrats of countries supplying and receiving weapons tend to develop mutually advantageous roles which can withstand the shocks caused by vital turns of circumstances. For instance, it was revealed in Congressional hearings that the Pentagon officials, in clear violation of expressly declared State Department ban on fresh arms sales to Pakistan, were offering⁷¹ new contracts to Pakistani officials as late as 20 July 1971. On this occasion, the State Department failed to coin ingenious terms to explain away the lapse committed by the Pentagon.

That it is too simplistic to regard the United States policy towards India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan as determined by Nixon's personal likes and dislikes stands confirmed by Nixon's annual foreign policy message to Congress, delivered on 9 February 1972. This message hands out a good conduct certificate to Yahya Khan — an incredibly partisan piece that makes sense only in the context of what has been noted in the previous paragraph.

Nixon spelt out the following claims in this message and stressed that war was not inevitable : Yahya Khan agreed to save Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from execution, to accept the presence of international relief officials in East Bengal, and to grant amnesty to refugees. Moreover, Yahya replaced the Military Governor of East Bengal (Lt. Gen. Tikka Khan) by a civilian (Dr. A. M. Malik), and gave time table for return to full-fledged civilian rule.⁷² None of these claims, put forward with a view to portraying Yahya Khan as a reasonable head of the State, can bear scrutiny. This may be indicated below.

As late as September 1971, it was reported that only 38 United Nations officials were allowed by Pakistan to supervise international relief efforts in East Bengal.⁷³ Such a small number of officials could hardly play a worthwhile part in meeting the relief needs of millions

displaced from their homes by the fear of Pakistani army atrocities. Nor could they be expected to prevent the misuse of relief materials by the occupation army. Independent sources (which could not be accused of a pro-Indian or anti-Pakistani bias) gave evidence of the diversion of relief materials to military purposes, of food being used as a political weapon.⁷⁴ Boats offered by the United States for relief work in cyclone-affected or flood-devastated areas appeared to be used by the army for anti-guerrilla operations in low-lying areas.⁷⁵ UNICEF vehicles were found loaded with Pakistani ammunition.⁷⁶ Pakistani officials ignored the urgent needs of non-Muslims⁷⁷ who could not be recruited as collaborators for the occupation army. Above all, relief efforts could succeed only after the political crisis was solved,⁷⁸ and refugees in India (numbering ten millions in December 1971) went back to Bangladesh. There was no sign of any serious effort being made by the Yahya regime or the United States towards a genuine political accommodation acceptable to the people of Bangladesh. Since March 1971 India continued to share an enormously heavy burden, while international aid for refugees remained meagre.⁷⁹

Amnesty for refugees,⁸⁰ declared by President Yahya Khan in September, was an unmitigated force. Even Mujib was not covered by it. Nixon's claim that the execution of Mujib was spared by Yahya sounds hollow because Yahya was willing to execute Mujib even while he was laying down his office and handing over the Presidency to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.⁸¹ Mujib's execution did not take place not really because Yahya was magnanimous⁸² or, at least, tactful, but because Bhutto cared much for his newly acquired office and had to worry about the effect of Mujib's execution on the fate of 93,000 Pakistani soldiers held as prisoners by India since the surrender of the Pakistani forces on 16 December 1971. The offer of amnesty was not extended to the Members of National and Provincial Assemblies belonging to the Awami League. The offer of amnesty was destined to remain meaningless as long as Yahya was not prepared to recognize the will of the people of Bangladesh by honouring the verdict of the 1970 election and thus allowing the emergence of settled conditions attracting refugees back from India. So long as the occupation army was operating in Bangladesh, and conditions remained unsettled, refugees could not be expected to return from India.⁸³ In his speech of 12 October 1971, however, Yahya Khan made the thoroughly unjustified observation that India was forcibly keeping refugees on its soil.⁸⁴ Reception centres opened for refugees by the military authorities in Bangladesh offered significant lessons. Independent sources provided telling evidence of what happened in these centres. One such source pointed to five stray dogs as the inhabitants of a centre.⁸⁵ Another visited reception centres only to discover that there was no refugee.⁸⁶ Pakistani authorities hired some persons who would

pose as refugees and move from one centre to another for the purpose of misleading foreign observers, but the latter saw through the game.⁸⁷ Impartial sources attested, furthermore, that the declaration of amnesty did not prevent the military authorities from arbitrarily arresting and shooting civilians.⁸⁸

Nixon's foreign policy message gave undue importance to Yahya's measures towards the restoration of civilian rule. On 3 September, President Yahya Khan's nominee, Dr. A. M. Malik, a civilian, took office as the Governor of 'East Pakistan' replacing Lt. Gen. Tikka Khan. Malik happened to be a prince among collaborators, almost universally known to be possessing an uncanny ability to be in the good books of successive West Pakistani ruling factions.⁸⁹ It is seldom easy to pick up a man and designate him as an individual lacking popular support absolutely. But Yahya Khan was able to discover such an individual in Malik and appoint him as the puppet executive head of an area actually ruled by an occupation army. This measure certainly matched other measures of normalization and civilianization which struck impartial observers as not only limited but also fraudulent.⁹⁰ Yahya refused to take even the essential preliminary step towards normalization, that is, talking to Mujib.⁹¹ Bhutto, who had sided with Yahya in refusing to accept the verdict of the 1970 election and connived at the genocide in Bangladesh, expressed himself against talking to Mujib.⁹² A White House suggestion for talks with Mujib was rejected by Yahya.⁹³ Yahya's measures for the establishment of civilian rule, which appeared impressive to the United States administration, included a ban on the Awami League enjoying near-universal support in Bangladesh, and a ban on the National Awami Party (imposed on 26 November 1971), the most influential party in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan.⁹⁴ Of the 455 East Bengal members of the National and Provincial Assemblies belonging to the Awami League, 273 were declared as disqualified, and by-elections (majority of them uncontested) were held to fill up the vacant seats.⁹⁵ Independent sources found these by-elections to be a transparent fraud.⁹⁶ Experts appointed by General Yahya Khan would formulate a Constitution. The National Assembly, having no substantial power of amendment, was to accept this military dictated Constitution as a genuine step towards civilian rule.⁹⁷ Perhaps the most revealing commentary on Yahya's measures for civilian rule was that they were being implemented at a time when the secret trial of Mujib (the most eminent votary of civilian rule who deserved the post of the Prime Minister of pre-March 1971 Pakistan on the basis of election results) was on.⁹⁸

In his foreign policy message President Nixon claimed that the December war in South Asia was neither acceptable to the United

States nor inevitable. The hollowness of this claim may be demonstrated as follows.

The United States administration made the war both acceptable and inevitable by continuing open support to Islamabad. It signed five arms agreements with the military regime of Pakistan from October 1970 to March 1971.⁹⁹ According to the General Accounting Office, an agency of the United States Congress, even after the administration assured Congress of a halt on arms shipments to Pakistan, in the month of July alone the United States Air Force transported by air aviation spare parts (including those for F-104 jets) worth \$ 500,000 to Pakistan. The report of this agency says that military items worth \$ 3.8 million were shipped to Pakistan between 25 March and 30 September 1971. The United States military depots abroad can export arms without normal export licences. Their value was not included in the sum of \$ 3.8 million, the report added. Moreover, the report said, the value of arms flowing to Pakistan between 30 September and 8 November (when the State Department banned export of arms on old but valid licences) was also excluded from this sum.¹⁰⁰ One is left only to speculate on the actual measure of arms supply to Pakistan during the savage pogrom when one considers the report of diversion of American arms from Vietnam to Pakistan.¹⁰¹ A little speculation on this line may cause more and more alarm at the support extended by Washington to Islamabad's war-making capability as well as intention. The United States administration inspired reports of a secret pact¹⁰² with Pakistan binding America to come to the assistance of Pakistan in case of the latter's clash with any country, communist or not, without prior legislative approval. There was a report of the United States alerting Iran and Jordan¹⁰³ to send arms to Pakistan and thus strengthen Pakistan in its war against India. Another report shockingly links the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States with the massacre of intellectuals in Dacca.¹⁰⁴ To study all these reports is to feel compelled to conclude that war became inevitable not only because the United States did not apply the right kind of pressure on Yahya but also because it gave Yahya the wrong sort of encouragement.

To Yahya war was both acceptable and inevitable. He launched a war-cum-genocide against his own people and continued it for nine months. This war was far more cruel than a war against armed forces of a neighbouring country.¹⁰⁵ To suggest, therefore, that Yahya did not want a war against India was to violate commonsense rather inexcusably. On the contrary, one could suggest that Yahya would be interested in internationalizing an internal matter by launching a war against India. That was probably a way out of the disaster he and his associates had themselves created. At best, he could receive sufficient outside aid, including armed intervention by the United States, and

thus consolidate the gains of genocide, averting, even if temporarily, the formal dissociation of Pakistan and Bangladesh. At worst, Yahya would lose the war against a demonstrably superior enemy and thus hie both the ignominy of the country's dismemberment resulting from genocide and the shame of defeat in a war. These suggestions can explain repeated threats by Yahya of war against India. The war he threatened was to be 'total', 'final', or simply 'imminent'.¹⁰⁶ Bhutto, too, did not fail to issue a threat of war against India.¹⁰⁷ War-mongering zeal governed the West Pakistani ruling circle and, thanks to the success of its propaganda machinery, the West Pakistani *élite* appeared to succumb to its influence. Independent observers recorded the prevalence of a war frenzy in West Pakistan and a feeling that war was inevitable.¹⁰⁸ In contrast, there was no war hysteria in India, or even in West Bengal, which was swamped by seven millions of refugees, and this, too, has been attested by impartial sources.¹⁰⁹

Five months after the commencement of genocide it was clear that the Mukti Bahini was a force to reckon with and that it would be able to augment its strength quickly.¹¹⁰ The machinery of crude terror let loose by Pakistan Special Forces (trained in the United States and employing those techniques which had failed in Vietnam) made it inevitable that the Mukti Bahini would become more and more popular and rapidly grow from strength to strength and be able to mount effective counter-offensives against the Pakistan army.¹¹¹ Pakistani officers remained confident of crushing the Bahini while the Bahini's organizers found the flow of recruits to be inexhaustible.¹¹² In a guerrilla warfare of the type launched by the Bahini, the army of occupation would require, at a modest estimate, a superiority of hundred to one.¹¹³ But Pakistan would never be able to command this superiority. Gradually, according to independent sources, guerrilla leaders established themselves as *de facto* district administrators.¹¹⁴ They not only controlled large tracts of territory but rendered extremely fragile the control exercised by Pakistani army in the key areas occupied by them.¹¹⁵ The Nixon administration has sharply criticized India for supporting the Mukti Bahini.¹¹⁶ It has not cared to suggest any alternative course of action India might follow in order to repel a threat to its territorial integrity caused by the influx of millions of refugees. Britain, a rich country, resisted the entry of 200,000 Asian Africans who held British passports.¹¹⁷ India, a poor country, was not expected to carry the burden of ten million refugees (and this number could eventually double) posing grave risks to social, economic and political stability. Pakistan resorted to a novel form of aggression upon a neighbouring country, which could be characterized as demographic aggression, did not entitle it to escape retaliation by the victim of its aggression.

The United States supported Pakistan's right to territorial integrity

and ignored the right to fundamental human freedoms for the people of Bangladesh. It also ignored India's right to territorial integrity. India denied its right to territorial integrity, without committing an outright aggression upon Pakistan, by aiding the Mukti Bahini. If sticklers for legal principles would condemn it as a sort of concealed aggression by India, it would be justified by the prior act of Pakistani aggression. Moreover, unlike the United States, India proved its respect for human freedoms in Bangladesh by offering refugees a shelter. When Yahya Khan lived up to his promise and launched a pre-emptive air strike upon India on 3 December 1971.¹¹⁸ India could openly fight back the Pakistani aggression which had begun as early as March 1971. Meanwhile, Lt. Gen. A. A. K. Niazi, the chief of Pakistani forces in Bangladesh, had not only expressed its readiness to enter Indian territory¹¹⁹ in pursuit of guerrillas but actually did so, and, furthermore, admitted sending saboteurs¹²⁰ to India. The full-scale Pakistani aggression of 3 December only removed the thin camouflage from a variety of aggressions committed by Pakistan upon India since March.

The United States has woven a fantasy that Indian military action torpedoed a political settlement being brought about by American initiative.¹²¹ The fact is, no substantial step towards a worthwhile political settlement was taken by the United States—at least, there was no visible evidence in this respect. India was not at fault so far as the outbreak of war was concerned. India avoided full-scale war till Pakistan started it. The United States administration's acquiescence in Pakistan's genocide plus war upon the majority of citizens in erstwhile Pakistan, leading to war against India, has made it untrustworthy in India and Bangladesh. According to an influential American commentator, 'in Bangladesh,...Americans are individually liked by the goodnatured Bengalis but the U.S. Government is detested.'¹²²

The United States support to Pakistan through nine months of unparalleled genocide is unusually shocking. But the American administration's policy itself is not unusual. This policy seeks to build up special relations with the military-industrial complex of as many countries as possible. It tends to be more successful when applied to countries with Governments committing repression on its own people or on the people in foreign lands. Success becomes easier when such a Government is dominated by the military. The United States supports the thoroughly undemocratic Government of Spain, bestowing little thought on the needs of the opposition fighting for democracy in Spain.¹²³ American support directly contributes to the capacity of the Spanish regime to subdue democratic aspirations. Recently, the United States entered into an agreement with Portugal for its military base in the Azores. This would provide Portugal with \$450 million in aid, and, according to four witnesses before the Foreign Relations

Committee of the United States Senate, this aid would substantially augment Portugal's capability of carrying on the war in its three African colonies.¹²⁴ Another recent evidence of the usual American foreign policy adventures is the agreement with Greece proposing to establish at Piraeus a home port for a carrier task force of the Sixth Fleet. This would lead to the stationing of 6,500 American naval personnel and 3,500 dependents. They would live in the Athens area.¹²⁵ This agreement would undoubtedly extend a financial support to the Greek regime and make it easier for this regime to stick to undemocratic ways. This would also enable the American administration to circumvent Congressional antipathy towards aid to Greece.

Finally, a word about the United States administration's frankly expressed chagrin over Indian military action riding itself of Pakistani aggression and lending a helping hand to the liberation of Bangladesh. Perhaps for the first time India has taken a decisive move, consistent with its resources and principles, which has reshaped the regional security system in South Asia and held out promises of lesser tension and hostilities in this region and of spreading the ideals of socialism, secularism and democracy. India thus pricked the balloon of American guardianship over security in this region — a role that the United States unsuccessfully sought to arrogate to itself.¹²⁶ The bitterness of the United States administration towards India's success gets intensified because of the administration's indelible recollection of lack of success in Vietnam. While India, a much less powerful country than the United States, has realized in a year its objectives (including the withdrawal of Indian troops from abroad) in the Bangladesh issue, none can be sure whether the United States will be able to accomplish any of its objectives in Vietnam, despite seven years of intense military endeavour. It is time for the richest country in the world to ponder whether American failure can be attributed to a divorce of ideals from military action.

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RAM JOSHI

Bangladesh and China-Pakistan Complicity

CHINA'S Bangladesh policy is a riddle. Students of China's foreign policy had expected China to stand by her oft-repeated promise of support to the 'just struggles' of oppressed peoples' fight for their independence. They were surprised to see her oppose the biggest national liberation movement in Asia and condemn it as counter-revolutionary. Maoist groups all over the world felt shocked and embarrassed. China called the Bangladesh question an 'internal matter for Pakistan', accused India of having committed aggression, warned her to be ready to face a 'shameful defeat' and finally lined up with the United States in the UN to impose on India a blatantly partisan resolution which totally ignored the realities in Bangladesh. Why did China behave in this way? That she is terribly angry with India is obvious. That is understandable also. But why is China so friendly towards Pakistan and so deeply committed to the preservation of her territorial integrity? What is the basis of this friendship? Is it the hatred towards India or something else?

BANDUNG CONFERENCE AND AFTER

China's friendship with Pakistan began in 1955 at the time of the Bandung Conference when Chou-en-Lai went out of his way to befriend Mohammad Ali of Bogra, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan. This he did in spite of Pakistan's membership of the supposedly anti-China SEATO Pact. Soon after the Bandung Conference, a top-level Chinese diplomat visited Pakistan to reassure the Pakistani rulers on three main counts. He told them that (1) there was no basic conflict of

interests between their two countries ; (2) that the same was not the case with China's relations with India ; and (3) that China appreciated Pakistan's anxiety to strengthen herself militarily by joining West-sponsored alliances because of the 'threat' from India.

In the fifties, Pakistan had only a regional significance for China. She did not need Pakistan's help for any anti-Soviet strategy. Her relations with Russia were friendly then. In fact, the two countries had presented a joint anti-imperialist front against the Anglo-American bloc. Nor could China hope to enlist Pakistan's support against the United States in view of Pakistan's close relationship with that country, her dependence on the U.S. economic and military aid and her membership of the U.S.-sponsored SEATO and CENTO Pacts. China's main concern then was India with whom she had a major border dispute. Moreover she thought India was her rival for the leadership of the Afro-Asian world and Pakistan could be used as a useful counterweight to India in the political alignments in South and South-east Asia. Thus friendship between China and Pakistan was inspired by a common hatred and hostility towards India.

Pakistan was born with a congenital hostility to India's nationalism, and her political projection, the Indian National Congress. As Wayne Wilcox says, 'Had the relations been good, Pakistan would never have been created.'¹ One cannot ascribe this animosity just to the communal killings and the exodus of refugees, because that affected India also. The Pakistani nationalism never had any positive moorings and philosophy. It fed itself on religious fanaticism and bigotry. The sole *raison d'être* of Pakistan's behaviour is the negative reaction to everything Indian. As Keith Callard put it, "Pakistan reacts hysterically to any suggestion that India outranks her in prestige or status."² The supreme test of Pakistani patriotism is a person's intense hatred of India. "In West Pakistan there is a morbid suspicion of the loyalty of the East (Pakistan) to the Pakistan concept. For many West Pakistanis the proof of the loyalty is the violence of a man's antagonism to India and her leaders. East Pakistan, preoccupied with her own backwardness, is apt to speculate on the advantages of closer ties with Calcutta and the Indian economy."³ West Pakistanis interpret the love of East Bengal for the Bengali language as a sneaking love of India.

VOLTE FACE ON KASHMIR

Until 1956, China used to assure India that the people of Kashmir had already expressed their wishes in favour of India. But when the border negotiations were going on, China suddenly effected a *volte-face* and refused to discuss the alignment of the border west of Karakoram Pass. On 31 May 1962, Peking informed Indian Embassy that she had

never accepted without reservation India's claim on Kashmir. R. K. Nehru was asked by the Chinese authorities in May 1961 to show any document wherein they had stated that Kashmir was not a part of India. A year later they asked India to show any document wherein they had stated that it was. On 2 March 1963, that is, within six months of her massive attack on India across the Himalayas, China signed a border agreement with Pakistan. The enormity of Pakistani duplicity can be judged from the fact that the announcement of the agreement was timed to coincide with the next round of talks on Kashmir between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan. This had the effect which China and Pakistan desired, namely, torpedoing the talks. When Pakistan and China issued the maps, many discrepancies were found in them. India protested vigorously against this agreement to the U.N. The Indian note laid bare Pakistan's surrender of part of 'Azad' Kashmir to China. When Bhutto returned from Peking after signing the treaty, he claimed that Pakistan had got 750 sq. miles of additional territory. But a note published by India exposed the hollowness of Pakistan's claims. Pakistani line of actual control in that area was to the south of the traditional border. That meant China was encroaching in that part of Kashmir also. But the alignment of the new border was still to the south of the Pakistani line under actual control, let alone the traditional border. The border, instead of running along Aghil range in the north, now runs along Karakoram range in the south. By this agreement Pakistan ceded roughly 13,000 sq. miles of occupied Kashmir linking it with Sinkiang. Prime Minister Nehru making a statement in the Lok Sabha on 5 March 1963, said :

"Neither Pakistan nor China has any *locus standi* in the matter except that of aggressors. By signing this agreement the Government of Pakistan have unilaterally altered not only in their favour but also in favour of another aggressor, China, the basis of the Security Council Resolution of January 17, 1948".

Thus the friendship that was forged in 1955 at Bandung was consolidated with the sole object of denying India her natural role in the subcontinent. It was still a relationship whose political and military significance was limited to the regional plane.

SINO-SOVIET RIFT

By 1964-65, the contextual plane of Sino-Pakistani friendship changed from the regional to the global, and friendship with Pakistan became an important plank of the larger anti-Soviet strategy. From now on it was even more necessary to enlarge the area of her influence in view of the change in the world situation from bipolarity to triangularity. By asserting her independence from Russian

influence and by raising her military strength to become a nuclear power, China had acquired the Big-Power status. She now needed superior rights in her neighbouring areas to be so recognized by both Russia and America. For this it was necessary first, to reduce Russian influence in this area, and second, to draw Pakistan ever closer. But first, India must be humbled. She was getting massive aid from America in the wake of the Chinese attack of 1962. Russia was siding with India by using her veto in the UN on the question of Kashmir. Russian *détente* with America was growing and it spelt danger to China which had not yet acquired enough nuclear power to withstand a possible combined onslaught. While India was profiting from the U.S.-Russia *détente*, Pakistan, under Bhutto's influence was feeling uneasy about the U.S. policy and was trying to move closer to China. The latter quickly saw in this situation the possibilities of checkmating India on the one hand and of wrecking Russo-American collusion on the other.

China's active role in the 1965 Indo-Pak War must be viewed in this context. There is no doubt that she encouraged Pakistan to try to seize Kashmir by force.

A day prior to the outbreak of that war, Marshal Chen Yi, the Foreign Minister of China, landed at Karachi for what was described as a brief stopover. But this 'brief stopover' was extended to a 16-hour stay as Bhutto hurriedly joined the Marshal for urgent talks. Next day Pakistan launched a massive armoured attack on Chhamb in a rapid thrust to capture Kashmir. When the bulk of her armour was decimated and destroyed by India, China tried to prop up her ally by threatening to attack the Indian protectorate of Sikkim. She issued an ultimatum to India making preposterous and ridiculous charges. She accused India of having constructed military structures on the Tibetan side and of having stolen 59 yaks and 800 sheep. Thus the Chinese wanted to rescue Pakistan by opening a second front against India. But there was nothing sudden or surprising about it. Back in 1959, the Chinese ambassador in New Delhi had left a written statement with the former Foreign Secretary of India, S. Dutt, which said "Friends, it seems to us that you cannot have two fronts. Is it not so? If it is, here lie the meeting points of our two sides."

This complicity between Pakistan and China had been brewing for the past many years and had now burst into the open.

Since 1965, China had stepped up her economic and military assistance to Pakistan. In November 1970, she gave President Yahya Khan of Pakistan a welcome the like of which had not been extended to any visiting dignitary for years and signed with him a loan agreement of 100 crore rupees. This demonstration of friendship and solidarity with a military-bureaucratic regime a month before the first ever general elections of Pakistan is an eloquent testimony to China's

deep commitment to the concept of one Pakistan. Although China did not open a second front this time as she threatened to do in 1965, she helped her ally in all possible way. She repeatedly declared that Bangladesh was an internal affair of Pakistan and she fully lined up with America to pull the chestnuts out of fire for Pakistan in the United Nations.

SINO-AMERICAN DETENTE

Pakistan, in turn, has been as good as her words. She played a useful role in bringing about the meeting between the Chinese leaders and Henry Kissinger, the national security adviser and the closest confidant of President Nixon. This meeting prepared the ground for the visit of Nixon to China. The support of both America and China to Pakistan these last few months may be viewed as a gesture of gratitude for the role played by Pakistan.

There is in evidence a growing *détente* between the U.S. and China. American view of future Asian politics appears to coincide with the Chinese view. The similarity of their approach is based on four main points : (i) Russia is the principal rival of both of them and this demands readiness to readjust mutual relationship. (ii) There is no major conflict of national interests once the U.S. has made up her mind for the gradual withdrawal from Asia and her recognition of the legitimate interests of China in south and south-east Asia. (iii) There is a developing co-existence between them in south-east Asia, and (iv) Formosa is no longer a major irritant. It is not improbable that the fuss America made in the UN over the ouster of Taiwan was meant for public consumption with the prior knowledge of the Chinese.

This parallelism between the American and the Chinese attitudes and the growing *détente* between them has again changed triangularity into some sort of bipolarity in which America, China and Pakistan are at one pole, and Russia and India at the other. One possible implication is that the three may act in concert to create fresh troubles for India.

The Chinese leaders are terribly upset over the developments leading to the 14-day war and India's victory in it. They are angry with India for three reasons : (i) The break-up of Pakistan has upset the balance of power in the Indian subcontinent in India's favour. No amount of military aid to Pakistan hereafter can make her an effective counterweight to India. In spite of all that America and China have done over the years, India has at last emerged as the dominant power ; (ii) China's world image as a supporter of revolutionary liberation struggles has been tarnished and she has been shown instead as the supporter of one of the world's most brutal regimes ; and (iii) The Russian influ-



ence and power have increased considerably in the region. This, according to China, has been the worst consequence of the Bangladesh question. For some time, the primary objective of China's foreign policy has been to contain the Soviet Union and prevent it from making inroads into south or south-east Asia. To the consternation of the Chinese, Russia has at one stroke achieved the biggest diplomatic victory and extended its influence. They are of course wild with Russia, but they are more so with India because she signed a treaty of friendship with Russia and thereby obtained Russian support to upset the *status quo* in the Indian subcontinent.

This is not to suggest that India should not seek normalizations of relations with China. But it should be ready to receive rebuffs from time to time till China is mentally reconciled to the changed realities. The Chinese are not likely to resign so easily and quickly to the situation in which India is a major power in her own right and Pakistan a minor dictatorship living on props supplied by America and China. They will try to do everything in their power to egg Pakistan on to continue her hostile posture and create more difficulties for India. The reference to Kashmir in the Sino-American communiqué issued after Nixon's visit to China amply illustrates this. But while China may wring her fingers and gnash her teeth at 'Social imperialists' or at 'Indian expansionism', she cannot wish away the new reality which is staring her in the face.

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B. N. GOSWAMI

Bangladesh—The Chinese Stand

IT IS DIFFICULT to write on China. The main problem is the paucity of source materials on the basis of which an objective analysis of any aspect of the Chinese policy may be possible. Available official Chinese documents are scanty and even some among these are mere propaganda designed for public consumption outside China. Secondary source materials on China are generally biased and motivated. For these reasons, a student of the Chinese affairs has to make some assumptions while analyzing China's policy. This is his limitation. This present paper which seeks to explain the Chinese stand on Bangladesh suffers from this limitation too.

I

To many people, even to some of China's close sympathizers and well-wishers, the peculiar Chinese reaction to the happenings in what was known as East Pakistan during the period of March-December 1971 appeared extremely perplexing. They wondered how could a communist government, committed to support the struggling people all over the world, remain indifferent to the plight of a people who had been fighting for their right to self-determination? How could a socialist regime support a military dictator in his attempt to retain control over a people who had morally and legally discarded him? A lot of pertinent and important questions regarding China's policy arose in this connexion. The most important of these which haunted the minds of many was : what would the Chinese attitude be in future towards a people who were forced to declare their independence from the parent country? Answer to this question is not only important by itself, but on it depends

the clue to a more fundamental issue whether in future the freedom struggles and liberation movements in other countries as well will receive any help and support from the revolutionery China.

It must be admitted at the outset that the basic question which was involved in the freedom movement in Bangladesh, the right to self-determination of a people, was not an anathema to China; on the contrary, the Chinese state policy is based upon the recognition of this principle. From the day when the Peoples Republic was proclaimed in China, one of the oft-repeated public assertions of the Peking Government has been that it adheres to the principle of supporting peoples' right everywhere to determine and choose their own destinies in accordance with their own free will. There had been several occasions in the past when China, in fact, had lent its support to the cause of autonomy and independence. China had unequivocally condemned the Soviet armed action in Czechoslovakia on the ground that it amounted to the suppression of the freedom of the Czech people. China had also lent its support to the cause of Biafra. On Kashmir, the official Chinese policy still harps on the free expression of the will of the Kashmiri people. In 1963, the governments of China and Pakistan in a joint communique reaffirmed their belief in 'the basic right of all peoples to decide their own destinies in accordance with their free will.'¹ Considering this public record of China on the issue of the struggle for autonomy and independence of the people, it appeared really queer that China would maintain a sphinx-like silence over the movement of the Bengalis for their right to self-determination. But in order to understand the apparently paradoxical Chinese behaviour, it is absolutely necessary to have an idea of the objective of the Chinese foreign policy in relation to undivided Pakistan. Because, the Chinese approach towards the struggle for Bangladesh stemmed from its foreign policy objective in Pakistan.

Initially, China-Pakistan relations had been rather cold. But this period of coldness was shortlived; it lasted roughly not more than two years. Serious thinking on Pakistan as a strategic factor in South Asia started in the Chinese Foreign office just after the Tibetan uprising in 1950, in which China suspected the hidden hand of India. Judging by later events, it seems that Peking at that time realized that although India-China relation was based on an apparently well-built foundation, Tibet might ultimately prove to be a great snag in the smooth development of the relations between the two Asian giants. Moreover, as the largest state in Asia, China was not completely unaware of the fact that India, being a potential power in Asia and firmly wedded to the Western political values, might not always entertain the idea of having and developing closer friendship with a communist country, committed to the revolutionary doctrines. Logic and power realities dictated China to think of an alternative to India as a second line of its defence in South Asia

in case of a possible deterioration of China-Indian relations. Its eyes naturally turned towards Pakistan, the other large state in the region which happened to be the hostile neighbour of India. Theocratic Pakistan by itself, which according to an earlier Chinese assessment was the creation of the British imperialism, had no particular appeal for China but the two most important considerations, one strategic and the other political, influenced the Chinese decision in seeking friendship and understanding with its Islamic neighbour.

The strategic consideration related to the geographical positions of the two wings of Pakistan. West Pakistan, especially its north-western part, still has immense strategic importance. That part of Kashmir which is now under the Pakistani occupation belongs to this region and has a common border with China. Moreover, it is in this region that China, the USSR, India, Pakistan and Afganistan meet. Strategically speaking, the region, apart from its nearness to Delhi, is close to the Pamir of the Soviet Central Asia and in these days of missiles, China, in any conflict with the Soviet Union, could hit it from its own territory near the Kashmir border, provided of course that the said region remains in a hand friendly to Peking.² So far as this strategy is concerned, it can be easily conceived that a friendly Pakistan was an imperative necessity for the Chinese long term defence planning. Equally important was what was known as East Pakistan to the long term Chinese strategy in Asia. Though situated far away from South East Asia—the primary sphere of the Chinese influence, East Pakistan was nearer to Tibetan border and more particularly its proximity to the Bay of Bengal had added attraction to China. Chinese footing in the Bay of Bengal, if, of course, it could have anyhow managed to secure, would have given it a strategic advantage in the Indian ocean and through it, China in the long run might have extended its influence up to the coast of Africa.³ For China, East Pakistan had another strategic advantage as it was situated in the heart of Eastern India.

These strategic considerations apart, the factor which influenced the Chinese decision with regard to Pakistan was political — the state of India — Pakistan relation. To any power, be it the USA or the Soviet Union or China, intending to play a significant role in the South Asian politics, the deep-rooted animosity between the two neighbours, India and Pakistan, would be a great advantage since it would enable the power concerned to play up one against the other. This aspect of India-Pakistan relation had not, it seems, escaped the notice of China. The political value of Pakistan as an irritant to India was in the mind of China, all along.

The above considerations primarily contributed to the shaping of China's Pakistan policy. The basic content of this policy was to keep Pakistan friendly and non-hostile towards China. Though the course

of Pakistan-China relation was not smooth and easy sailing, the fundamental objective of the Chinese policy remained the same throughout. Even at the worst provocations, China followed what may be called an indulgent attitude towards Karachi. For example, when in 1954 SEATO was formed to contain China in Asia and Pakistan joined this U.S. sponsored military pact, the Chinese wrath interestingly fell not upon Pakistan, but on the other signatories to this treaty.⁴ Not even a protest note was sent to Karachi for this apparently unfriendly act against China. Similarly, Pakistani's joining the Bagdad Pact in 1955 aroused little resentment in Peking. How far China was concerned at this time for having a good relation with Pakistan would be evident from the happenings in the Bandung Conference in 1955. There, Chou-en Lai, after having a discussion with pro-west Mohammad Ali of Bogra, openly declared that China had no animosity against Pakistan despite the latter's joining the Western military bloc and that China sincerely needed the Pakistani goodwill and friendship.⁵ This feeling was also conveyed to Prime Minister Suhrawardy when he visited China in 1956. To provide Pakistan with further evidence of her sincerity, China kept an apparently neutral attitude towards the Kashmir issue during a period when the India-China honeymoon was at its peak.⁶

The early sixties saw the emergence of two factors in the international arena, which led China not only to consolidate its friendship with Pakistan but to assure the latter of its vigorous support in case there were any violation of the Pakistani territory and sovereignty by any external power. These factors were : first, the Sino-Indian armed clash and second, the Sino-Soviet dispute followed by the increasing Soviet efforts to counteract the Chinese influence wherever possible. For China, all these implied that henceforward not only the imperialist United States but the social imperialist Soviet Union and India would also be its adversaries and that these powers would wholeheartedly seek to isolate it from the mainstream of world politics. The increasing Soviet participation in the South Asian politics and the growing Indo-Soviet collaboration in the diplomatic sphere which culminated in the conclusion of the Indo-Soviet Treaty in August 1971 increased the Chinese suspicion that Moscow-Delhi axis was determined to prevent China from playing any major role in South Asia. China felt that its diplomacy would have to be geared up to keep pace with the emerging situations in South Asia which required concentration of the Chinese attention the more on Pakistan. The difference in the Chinese outlook towards Pakistan during the fifties and sixties was that in the fifties Chinese policy merely aimed at keeping Pakistan friendly but in the sixties China felt that merely friendly posture towards Pakistan was not enough. It was also necessary on her part to see that under the new context of the power tangle in South

Asia the territorial integrity of Pakistan was maintained and that no power could unduly exert influence and pressure upon Pakistan to the detriment of China's interest. That was why from the early sixties, the Chinese policy hinged mainly on the policy of maintaining the territorial integrity and independence of Pakistan. From this time onward, China began to assure Pakistan that it would stand resolutely by it if it were attacked by any external power. On this basis perhaps, Bhutto very often claimed in the past that an attack upon Pakistan would be an attack upon the largest state in Asia.⁷ In fact, China really demonstrated its sincerity in this matter particularly during the India-Pakistan war in 1965. Peking was reported to have warned India during this war that if India attacked East Pakistan, China would intervene.⁸

In this background China's reaction to the Bangladesh issue should be studied. The circumstances leading to the declaration of Independence by the East Pakistani people are now wellknown. It is not necessary to dilate on them. But it should be erroneous to consider the Bangladesh issue simply in terms of a struggle of the Bengalis against their West Pakistani exploiters as some people preferred to think. To these people, the restoration of legal, economic and political rights of the Bengalis would have solved the Pakistani crisis of 1971. On this understanding they talked of a political settlement of the question. But this was an oversimplification of the issue. The Bangladesh issue really represented a fundamental conflict between the two peoples, two cultures and two social values represented by two different wings of Pakistan. A temporary compromise between the two wings was perhaps possible but that would have been very much fragile. Secondly, it should be noted that the struggle of the East Pakistani people who constituted 55% of the total population of the country had legal justification. The people there first voted unmistakably in favour of their autonomy in a perfect constitutional way and having found their verdict trampled under brutal force, they had no option but to declare their independence from the parent country. The Bangladesh movement was not, therefore, the creation of 'a handful of persons who want to sabotage the unity of Pakistan' as China wanted to make us believe, but a genuine struggle of a people who wanted to see their Punjabi exploiters overthrown.

In fact, the Bangladesh crisis of March-December 1971 posed a delicate question for China. China was confronted with the question of supporting one of the two principles involved in the issue : (a) the right to self-determination of the people and (b) the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a neighbour and an ally. The respect for the territorial integrity of its neighbour as enunciated in the Pancha-Sheel has been the basic guide of China's state relations. The

choice for China was obviously a delicate one. It seemed, however, that the Chinese policy makers in taking their decisions were heavily influenced by the traditional doctrine of national self-interest. They decided to uphold the doctrine of the inviolability of the territorial integrity of Pakistan thereby completely disregarding the desire and struggle of the seventy-five million people for a national home of their own. Various explanations could be given as to why China chose the first course, completely ignoring the moral, ideological and legal aspects of the struggle by Bangladesh.

According to some, the class character of the struggle and its leadership were not to the liking of the Chinese communists. The struggle, as the Chinese viewed it, was essentially a revolt of the Bengali middle class against a privileged section in the Western wing, which used to enjoy the monopoly of state power. In the Marxist terminology, it was purely a bourgeois affair. China thought that on such an issue it could not support a people whose aim was not a radical transformation of a society on the socialistic model but merely the capture of state power from the hands of the ruling class in Pakistan. Moreover, it is probable that the assessment of the situation by the Chinese diplomats in Dacca might have convinced the Chinese Foreign Office that the struggle was not likely to be prolonged as the superior military machine of Yahya was competent enough to crush the rebellion within a short time, if, of course, the other Powers did not intervene. The Chinese calculation, therefore, was : why should it burn its fingers in supporting a cause that was doomed to failure ? Why should it take the unnecessary risk of alienating Pakistan by adopting a sympathetic posture to the freedom-fighters in East Pakistan with no corresponding benefits to its own position in South Asia ? This was one likely explanation of the Chinese position.

Secondly, the success of the Bangladesh movement, under the leadership of pro-west Mujib would not have brought any tangible benefit to China. The government in Dacca under pro-west Mujib, China calculated, would be completely under the influence of the powers hostile to China and that factor would ultimately result in the emergence of a new balance of power in South Asia, favourable to the contenders of China. For Peking, this was surely not an acceptable proposition. In fact, it cannot be expected of a government too, be it communist or capitalist, to support a movement whose success would bring for it nothing but the weakening of its own position in the international field.

Thirdly, the direct and open encouragement to a people in their attempt to secede from a union had wider implications for China. If China supported the struggle of the East Pakistanis for their independence on the ground of the right to self-determination, what moral justi-

fication China should have offered in future in opposing the Tibetan people's right to independence?

Therefore, instead of backing the movement of the East Pakistanis, China adopted a rigid legal stand over the issue, saying that the happenings in East Pakistan were purely 'internal affairs of Pakistan' and that any support to the movement of a handful of persons in East Pakistan would constitute an interference into the affairs of that country. China suggested that the matter be settled amicably by the Pakistani people themselves. "The unity of the people of East and West Pakistan is the basic guarantee for Pakistan to prosperity and strength," said Chou in a message to Yahya in connexion with the crisis." But when India began to show a keen interest in the movement and a free Bangladesh Government was proclaimed, according to the Chinese, in the Indian soil with the active support and encouragement of New Delhi, Peking discerned in the developments in East Pakistan the hands of the Soviet Union and India who were bent upon dismembering Pakistan's territorial integrity. The fight of the Bengalis appeared to Peking purely as a movement for secession, a movement that was being encouraged by India for the dismemberment of Pakistan. This, China, as a friend of Pakistan, could not tolerate. In accordance with its broader objective of Pakistan policy, Peking thought it fit to help the actions of military regime in their effort to maintain Pakistan's territorial integrity and national independence. One thing should be remembered in this connexion. China, throughout the crisis, studiously avoided pronouncing upon the merits of the struggle in East Pakistan. It had not expressed its views on the question whether the allegations of the Bengalis that they were being exploited by the capitalists of the Western wing were true or not.

The Chinese stand on Bangladesh was perhaps also designed to demonstrate to the pro-Western army leadership in Pakistan the credibility and sincerity of the Chinese friendship in contrast to the attitude of other two big Powers towards the issue.

However, it is clear from the above discussion that in the determination of its policy towards the Bangladesh crisis, China just like any other nation, was guided by its own national interest, sacrificing its proclaimed principle of supporting the oppressed and struggling people all over the world. From the Bangladesh issue, one lesson can however be drawn that henceforward the freedom-fighters or revolutionaries in every country are to depend upon their own resources and, that no country, revolutionary or reactionary, would help them if their struggle does not serve its own national interest.



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BUDDHADEVA BHATTACHARYYA

The Right of Nations to Self-Determination and China's Response to Bangladesh Issue

'SELF-DETERMINATION OF NATIONS,' writes Lenin in *The Rights of Nations to Self-Determination*, means the political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, and the formation of an independent national state.¹ He further adds : "'self-determination of nations" in the Marxists' Programme cannot, from a historico-economic point of view, have any other meaning than political self-determination, state independence, and the formation of a national state.'² In his thesis entitled *The Socialist Revolution and The Right of Nations to Self Determination*, the great revolutionary says : 'The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation. This demand is not the equivalent of a demand for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states. It implies only a consistent expression of struggle against all national oppression.'³

In order to constitute a nation or a national state, 'there must be politically united territories whose population speak the same language with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. Language is the most important means of human intercourse.'⁴

It needs no elaboration that the Bengalis decidedly constitute a nation by community of a culture and language and they inhabit a definite area. And is there anyone who does not know that they were a subject nationality in that most unreal political entity, the nation-state of Pakistan ?

Bukharin and Preobrazhensky in their 'elementary textbook of communist knowledge' point out quite categorically: 'The Communist Party, declaring a relentless war upon all oppression of man by man, takes a decisive stand against that oppression of subject nationalities which is indispensable to the existence of the bourgeois system.'³

Those 'Marxists' who, in the name of the unity and integrity of Pakistan, opposed the 'secessionist' move of Bangladesh nationalists would do well to refer to Lenin: 'From their daily experience the masses know perfectly well the value of geographical and economic ties and the advantage of a big market and a big state. They will, therefore, resort to secession only when national oppression and national friction make joint life absolutely intolerable and hinder all economic intercourse. In that case, the interests of capitalist development and of the freedom of the class struggle will be best served by secession.'⁴

Can we regard the Bengali people of former Pakistan as an enslaved people? According to Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, 'when in any State the people of one nation possess all rights and the people of another nation possess only a part of these rights; when the stronger nation has against the will of the weaker nation imposed upon the latter a foreign tongue, foreign customs etc.; when the people of the weaker nation are not allowed to lead their own lives — then we have what is termed oppression of a subject nationality, we have national enslavement.'⁵ Any comment is hardly necessary.

National oppression of the Bengalis reached such a height that any further economic intercourse between the oppressor West Pakistan and the Bengali nation was absolutely blocked and their joint life was made absolutely intolerable.

It has been argued that by supporting the Bengalis, 'You are promoting separatist tendencies.' This is an old repetition of the charges against the Marxists-Leninists. The same sort of wrong opinion was held by Rosa Luxemburg, and Lenin had to rebuke her sharply: 'While recognizing equality and equal rights to a national state, it (the proletariat) values above all and places foremost the alliance of proletarians of all nations, and assesses any national demand, any national separation, *from the angle of the workers' class struggle.*'⁶

It has also been argued that the Bangladesh movement was led by the Awami League, a bourgeois nationalist party and hence the genuine Marxists-Leninists should have no truck with the same. This is a patently anti-Leninist theory.

It was in connexion with the Polish question that Lenin sharpened his position on the right of nations to self-determination, a right which Rosa Luxemburg had questioned. She had argued: By supporting the right to secession you are supporting the bourgeois nationalism of the

oppressed nations. Not so, said Lenin : 'In so far as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case, and more strongly than anyone else, in favour, for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression... The bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed *against* oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support.'⁹

The proletarians, said Lenin, are against special privileges for any nation, hence also for the bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation. But Lenin had no doubts that the maintenance of the right of secession and the general principle, the "absolute right" for which Lenin was contending, was thus not any "natural right" of self-determination, but the right of resistance to oppression, which always coincided with the interests of the workers in their struggle for freedom and socialism.¹⁰

II

With these theoretical postulates in our view, let us now proceed to analyse the case of Bangladesh. As Lenin reminds us : 'The categorical requirement of Marxist theory in investigating any social question is that it be examined within *definite* historical limits, and if it refers to a particular country (e.g., the national programme for a given country), that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical epoch.'¹¹

The statehood of Pakistan was based on the reactionary and medieval religio-communal ideology of Islamic nationalism, representing the class interests of Muslim feudalist-cum-bourgeois upper classes (the bourgeois elements came mostly from the petty-bourgeoisie and educated urban intelligentsia, although it was the feudal landowning leadership that predominated) smarting under conscious and unconscious Hindu domination of India's anti-imperialist nationalism in the early decades of the present century. It was, from that point of view, a reactionary and backward-looking political entity having nothing in common with a secular democratic conception of modern nationhood based on the affinity of territorial and economic interests and a community of language and culture. The Bangladesh national freedom struggle represented a break with that medieval and obscurantist concept of nationalism on the part of the people of East Bengal who had found to their cost that the ideology of Islamic nationalism of Pakistan was nothing but a cover for the colonial type of domination of West Pakistani and Punjabi big business and landowning interests over the Bengali Muslim masses of East Bengal. To that extent Bangladesh national freedom struggle had a definitely progressive bourgeois-democratic content.

There is no doubt that the leadership of the freedom movement in Bangladesh represented basically the interests of the Bengali-speaking nascent Muslim bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie (including peasantry, particularly the richer upper strata). The Awami League leadership has all the weaknesses and limitations of bourgeois leadership in a backward country which has hardly emerged free from a semi-colonial status. We have to remember, however, that this is an historical class limitation within which every bourgeois-democratic nationalist movement operates in the national democratic phase, unless the workers, peasants and the mass of toiling peoples are advanced enough organizationally and politically to supplant the bourgeois leadership. In spite of this limitation, necessarily arising out of the class character of the leadership, however, the bourgeois-democratic social content of the Bangladesh freedom movement represented by the ideology of a territorially and linguistically affiliated secular nationalism and the urge for national freedom on that basis had a positive progressive character as well as a mass content.

This is the Leninist perspective. But have the leaders of Communist China, professedly the true standard-bearers of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism, cared to carry out in practice Lenin's behest that the socialists of large countries are duty-bound to fight every form of national oppression, and to support the right of nations to self-determination?

III

Communist China has been trying to project itself as the champion-leader of the revolutionary peoples of the world, and more particularly of what is popularly known as the Third World. It has been exhorting the genuine Marxists-Leninists to rise up against 'modern revisionism' and Soviet 'social imperialism' and rally round the banner of Mao Tse-tung Thought, the Marxism-Leninism of contemporary times. Mao writes: 'Let the revolutionary people of the whole world unite and overthrow imperialism, modern revisionism and reactionaries in every country.'¹² The struggle in Bangladesh against the Yahya regime should, from Mao's appeal quoted above, be regarded as a just struggle against 'reactionaries'. But Peking's attitude is a far cry from its oft-proclaimed revolutionary principles on national-liberation movements and the rights of nationalities to self-determination. There is a wide gulf between its proclamation of principle and the official line with regard to the freedom struggle of the people of Bangladesh.

The joint communiqué issued as Yahya Khan was returning to Pakistan after his November 1970 talks with Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-

lai, is worth recalling in view of the subsequent developments in E. Bengal (now Bangladesh). A key section reads : 'Premier Chou En-lai and President Yahya Khan held talks in a very sincere and friendly atmosphere on important international issues, further development of friendly relations and co-operation between China and Pakistan and other questions of common interest. Both sides were highly satisfied with the results of the talks'. Once again, great stress was placed on the Kashmir question, but nothing was said about Bengal. There was no mention either of national-liberation struggles in Indo-China.

Khan had no intention of upsetting his American backers more than was necessary. (Khan was at that time negotiating a new arms agreement with President Nixon. Some Asian observers thought the Peking trip was designed to twist the Americans' arm.)

Armed with Mao's political and, if necessary, military backing Yahya Khan returned from Peking to face the December general elections.

Broadcasting a week before the country went to the polls, Khan told his listeners about 'the enthusiastic reception accorded to me' while in China, and about his 'very useful exchange of views with Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Premier Chou En-lai.'

He then made an observation whose full meaning became clear only three months later : 'I believe our growing friendship with China is a positive contribution to peace, stability and progress in our region. We appreciate the abiding and sincere interest of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan's struggle and development, and are grateful for its generous assistance in economic and other fields...'

Naturally, the full details of the Khan-Mao-Chou talks have not been revealed. But their political and military implications became obvious in the first days of the fight in East Bengal.

Denied the use of Indian air space, West Pakistan troop-carriers refuelled in China before landing in Dacca, an arrangement that surely must have been agreed upon well before the fighting broke out on March 25.

China's press and radio blacked out all news of the massacres in E. Bengal by Khan's troops. After all, it was only four months ago that Peking workers had been summoned on to the streets to cheer Yahya Khan as a great ally of the Chinese people.

When it became obvious that East Bengal was not to be subdued by W. Pakistan army terror, China began reproducing the Khan version of reports of the situation.

The initial indications in regard to the Chinese line of thinking on the issue of Bangladesh came indirectly in course of the Protest Note of Chinese Government to the Government of India against a Jan Sangh organized demonstration before the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi

on March 29, 1971. We need hardly make any comment on the political motivation of Jan Sangh. The Chinese Protest Note to New Delhi appeared to take umbrage at the suggestion contained in the Memorandum pasted by the Jan Sanghis at the PRC Embassy gate that 'China was aiding Pakistan Government in its war on the freedom-loving people of East Bengal.' This suggestion, the Chinese note categorically asserted, was nothing but a 'slander' against China which bore no relation to truth. The truth was, according to the Peking Note, the following :

'It is known to all that the Chinese Government basing itself on the five principles of peaceful co-existence has never interfered in the internal affairs of other countries.'

It has been argued by some of those who seek to defend Chinese policy that Peking has merely declared a policy of strict non-intervention in Pakistan's internal affairs. As a recent pro-Chinese pamphlet — *The People's War* written by supporters of the 'Maoist' Communist Party of East Bengal and published in London — puts it, 'the Chinese have never opposed the right of the people of Bangladesh to self-determination or their right to withdraw from the State of Pakistan'. All that they have done is to oppose 'foreign interference' notably by India and the Soviet Union.

The defenders of the Chinese line argue that as a State People's China would not formally take sides either with the freedom-fighters of East Bengal against their Government, or with the Government and the rulers of Pakistan against the freedom-loving peoples of Bangladesh.¹²

But any charitable interpretation of the Chinese stand on these lines became untenable after the *People's Daily* article and more particularly after the publication of the letter addressed to President Yahya Khan by Premier Chou En-lai in the *Dawn* of Karachi on April 12, 1971. (The letter made public on April 12 by the West Pakistan government is also quoted in a Reuters dispatch of the same date in April 13, *New York Times*).

The Commentator's article ('What are the Indian Expansionists Trying to Do?') in the *People's Daily* appeared on 11 April. 'Commentator' in the *People's Daily* is usually a very high authority. The article openly ranged the Communist Chinese regime on the side of Yahya Khan.

Already the leaders of British and American imperialism had declared the massacres in East Bengal to be an 'internal affair' of the Pakistan government. Now Peking justified its stand on the side of Khan on the same line :

'The relevant (*sic*!) measures taken by President Yahya Khan in connection with the present situation in Pakistan are the internal affairs of Pakistan, in which no country should or has the right to interfere...'

The same reactionary principle is used by imperialism to defend right-wing dictatorships in Spain, Greece and South Africa, to name only three examples.

This statement of support for Yahya Khan ended with these words : 'The Pakistan people have the revolutionary tradition of opposing imperialism and colonialism, and have waged unyielding struggle against aggressors and interventionists from outside.

'The Chinese government and people will, as always, resolutely support the Pakistan government and people in their just struggle for safeguarding national independence and state sovereignty against foreign aggression and interference.'

The *People's Daily* article was followed up the next day by a message from Chou En-lai to Yahya Khan, declaring once again that 'what is happening in Pakistan at present is purely an internal affair of Pakistan...

'The Chinese Government and people are following with close concern development of the present situation in Pakistan. Your Excellency (meaning President Yahya Khan) and leaders of various quarters in Pakistan have done a lot of useful work to uphold the unification of Pakistan and to prevent it from moving towards a split.'

'We believe that through the wise consultations and efforts of your Excellency and leaders of various quarters in Pakistan the situation in Pakistan will be rendered normal.'

'In our opinion, the unification of Pakistan and the people of East and West Pakistan are the basic guarantees for Pakistan to attain prosperity and strength.'

Chou went further than the *People's Daily* when he said : 'It is important to differentiate the broad masses of the people from a handful of persons who want to sabotage the unity of Pakistan.'

Chou En-lai's letter made it quite clear that the Chinese Government was basically opposed to the idea of independence of Bangladesh and supported most strongly and wholeheartedly Yahya's idea of the unity of Pakistan and of the people of East and West Pakistan under a single State. Chou En-lai thought that the broad masses of the people of Pakistan (both in the East and the West) supported the idea of unification of Pakistan ; it was only 'a handful of persons' who wanted to 'sabotage' this unification and support the idea of 'split'.

It is evident that after this, it would be impossible to assert that the Chinese Government and people — in whose name Chou En-lai speaks — were not opposed to the independence of East Bengal for which the freedom fighters of Bangladesh fought. According to Chou En-lai, without unification of Pakistan and the unity of the people of East and West it would not be possible for Pakistan to attain prosperity and strength. That is why he lauded the 'lot of useful work' done by President



Yahya Khan and other leaders of various quarters of Pakistan 'to uphold the unification of Pakistan and to prevent it from moving towards a split.' Logically, it follows from the views expressed by Premier Chou En-lai that those who were fighting against the military dictatorship of Yahya Khan for the freedom of Bangladesh or for political separation of East Bengal 'are harming' the interests of the 'broad masses' of the people of Pakistan. It would also serve to explain why some sections of pro-China leftists in this country had been trying to denigrate the freedom struggle of Bangladesh in the eyes of their followers by branding it as a movement sponsored in the interest of the US imperialists, although they adopted a different attitude earlier.

John Gittings, a keen analyst of Chinese foreign policy, observes : 'Whatever reservations China may have privately, its public diplomatic posture certainly amounts to endorsement for Yahya.'¹⁴ In May 1971 there was a banquet in Peking to celebrate the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Pakistan, the signing of a new agreement of border trade, and the opening of a new highway between the two countries across the Karakorum and Pamir Ranges, while a military delegation from Pakistan's Air Force visited China. The New China News Agency announced that Air Commodore Kamal Ahmad, Commander of the Pakistan Air Force Staff College, 'arrived in Peking on April 18 and attended a banquet given in his honour by Kuan Janaung, Deputy Commander of the Chinese Air Force.'¹⁵ His arrival in Peking was almost certainly connected with Pakistan's continued use of Chinese air space and refuelling stations for planes flying between West Pakistan and East Bengal war zone.

One may recall here that on 13 July, 1969, the Peking regime gave a special banquet in honour of Air Marshal Nur Khan, a member of the ruling military junta that had crushed popular uprising only a few months before. Chou En-lai pledged the militarist commander 'on behalf of the Chinese Government and people, our resolute support to the Pakistan Government and people (the 'Islamic' people ?) in their just struggle to safeguard state sovereignty and national dignity...'¹⁶

Peking's moral support was greatly welcomed by the military dictatorship in Islamabad because so far the People's Republic of China has been the only significant big power to defend openly the 'pacification' of East Bengal.

The government-controlled press in West Pakistan had made it clear that both Washington and Peking were backing the dictatorship's 'pacification' effort.

China's position was praised in the *Pakistan Times* (April 10) which in an editorial headed "China's Lead" said : 'China's pre-eminence among the big powers rests on the fact that it is the only one among

them which abides by the normal precept to which the others pay only lip service.¹⁷

'Peking's protest note to New Delhi accusing India of flagrant interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan has pleased the government in this country,' Qutubuddin Aziz noted in a cable from Karachi in the April 10 *Christian Science Monitor*.

The West Pakistan *Morning News* stated in an editorial on April 14 : 'China has, as befits a true friend, spoken out her support in unmistakable terms...'¹⁸

Another pro-Khan paper, *The Azad*, was equally outspoken in its praise for Peking : 'We extend our heartiest greetings to the Chinese government for their firm support. The way China has come forward with support deserves thanks from all patriotic Pakistanis...'¹⁹

Even some well-informed capitalist reporters, usually careful to point out that Peking puts its national interest before its revolutionary rhetoric, found it difficult to believe that the communist leadership in China would pass up such an un hoped-for opportunity to be missed. In the April 10 issue of the *Christian Science Monitor*, Joseph C. Harsch wrote : 'The immediate practical problem is how to prevent China from taking advantage of the present state of affairs.'

When Peking's attitude became clear, the conservative *Christian Science Monitor* devoted its editorial in its April 14 issue to praising the communist regime's political maturity.

'For the Chinese the temptation must have been enormous to aid and abet the independence movement in East Pakistan. With proper timing and aid it is probable, indeed almost certain, that they could have set in motion a political movement which would have first made East Pakistan independent of West Pakistan and converted it into a new East Bengal...

'It could easily have meant that someday Bengal, would have gone Communist, in the Maoist rite. And that would have teamed the hundred million people of reunited Bengal with the seven or eight (?) hundred millions of China...

'What a gorgeous daydream for Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai !

'But then, there is always in power politics that miserable "other side of the coin".

(The capitalist paper was referring to new diplomatic alignments supposedly unfavourable to China that might result.)

'Would Peking then come out the real winner, or the real loser ?

'The answer is much too uncertain to make the game worth the candle.

'Or at least that must have been the calculation in Peking because the men there have made their first important move in this game and the move was clear, uncompromising support for the government of West Pakistan....



'This was a vote for the *status quo*, as opposed to the unsettling of Asia. . .

'Particularly interesting to Westerners is that this move also fits comfortably with Peking's new chumminess toward the United States. Being friendly to Americans (not necessarily to the government in Washington, which they seem to want to keep in a separate drawer) and behaving with such commendable restraint toward Pakistan and India is the behavior of a prudent great power behaving in a sophisticated manner.'

Despite the charges that US imperialism, Soviet 'social imperialism', and Indian 'expansionism' were trying to cause chaos and confusion in East Bengal,²⁰ however, the weight of all the great powers interested in the East Bengal conflict had fallen on the Pakistani side of the scales, Schanberg noted in his April 13 dispatch to the *Christian Science Monitor*. 'The Pakistani military are using jet fighter-bombers, heavy artillery and gunboats —mostly supplied by the United States, the Soviet Union and Communist China.'

Communist China and feudalist Saudi-Arabia offered large-scale economic aid to the West Pakistan regime. Yahya Khan had been trying to secure a six-month standstill on the country's debt repayments to the World Bank. And Peking was expected to begin formal negotiations with Islamabad government to fix the amount of this aid.

According to the *Karachi Daily News*, China will export to Pakistan goods worth £ 150m under the new deal over the next year.²¹

East Bengal was Pakistan's main foreign exchange earner, but had exported nothing since fighting began there on March 25.

Yahya Khan could not have survived in West Pakistan, let alone hold down Bangladesh aid, without foreign economic and military assistance.

Significantly, the Chinese Communists came to his rescue at almost exactly the same time as the feudalists of Saudi-Arabia and the imperialists of the United States.

To justify its support for the Islamabad military dictatorship, Peking had argued that the Bengali nationalists represent the 'emergent bourgeoisie of East Pakistan,' according to a dispatch in the April 14 issue of the *Christian Science Monitor*. 'Mainland China looks on East Pakistan leader Sheikh Mujibar Rahman as a close associate of the imperialists, a high level Chinese Communist diplomat in New Delhi told an Asian News Service Correspondent...'²²

• We do not propose to discuss the political biography of Rahman in the present paper. We would just like to point out that a political act of commission or omission needs some rationalization in terms of ideology. Theory is sought to rationalize politics pursued in the interests of power. The leaderships of the Communist states (Soviet Union

and People's China alike) are adept in this art of rationalization. It is not ideology that determines their politics; rather it is immediate diplomatic exigencies and national state interests that shape them.

Diplomatically and politically isolated, Peking was apparently willing to trade its revolutionary principles for military and trade pacts with an amenable monopolist-capitalist-landlord-military dictatorship in its own backyard.

Since West Pakistan shares a common border with China, Peking has obviously been anxious to lure Islamabad away from the American-sponsored regional security pacts. East Bengal (now Bangladesh), the Maoist leaders in China have evidently noted, is entirely surrounded by India. And according to the diplomatic calculation of Peking, a free Bangladesh would automatically become a client state of India — which in its turn is tied to US imperialism and Soviet 'social imperialism'.

Ideological considerations play the least part in Peking's attitude towards its neighbours. If ideology would have guided the rulers of Peking then how could they have withheld their support to Bangladesh struggle, a struggle for independence? Do they not profess to uphold the cause of self-determination of the nationalities? As we have pointed out earlier, they proclaim it in principle only. And they wax eloquent on the right of nations to self-determination if and when they find it convenient to serve their own national state interest *vis-à-vis* other states with which they are not on friendly terms. For example, Peking supported 'the right of Kashmiris to determine their own fate', and strongly condemned the pro-Moscow communists for advocating the *status quo* in Kashmir. Peking and the Maoists in different parts of the world²³ argued that the Kashmiris speak altogether a different language and have a different culture, and therefore constitute a different nation. On the same basis, China had supported the Nagas and Mizo rebels. If Peking had been supporting 'the cause' of Nagas, Mizos and Kashmiris, i.e. interfering in the 'internal affairs' of India, then on what grounds could it refuse to support the cause of Bangladesh? All these movements were being fought under the leadership of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie. Peking's concern for the 'unity' of Pakistan can only be explained in terms of its determined attempt to bring Pakistan closer into its orbit.

While it is often necessary for a socialist state to negotiate diplomatic agreements with capitalist ones, the Chinese communists extended their alliance to a wholesale political endorsement of the Pakistani military regime and abandoned support for the national-liberation struggle of the Bengalis against the Pakistani rulers. Peking's stand on the recent uprising in Ceylon may be noted here in this connexion.²⁴

It has been claimed that Peking's Pakistan policy has paid dividends :
 (i) the US military base had been removed from Pakistan and
 (ii) Islamabad had expressed its support to the liberation struggles of

Vietnam and Palestine.²⁵ Because of the obvious limitation of space we cannot examine this argument in detail. We would just quote a statement made by the Palestinian guerilla leader, Yasner Arafat, which reveals a different picture.

A PTI dispatch, dateline Cairo August 1, 1971, says : 'He (Arafat, the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization) charged a Pakistani Army general with having "planned and supervised" the Jordanian Army's operations to annihilate the Palestinian Commandos... this is the first time that a guerilla leader has exposed Islamabad's role in operations against the commandos.'²⁶

Before we conclude, we would like to refer to an article by Neville Maxwell (a very much familiar name to students of current affairs since the publication of *India's China War*) which he read before the Oxford Group on Strategic Studies.²⁷ It deals with the general posture of the People's Republic of China in its external affairs relations. Section V of that article specifically deals with the question of Chinese support to revolutions in other countries and his reference to Chinese relations with the military-fascist regime of Pakistan.

To quote Maxwell : '... while the Chinese hail every development in the world which looks to them as if it has revolutionary potential, the actual aid they have supplied to revolutionary movements — and in the material sense, guns and money rather than example and exhortation — has been minimal.²⁸ China has, of course, been assisting North Vietnam ; but her actions with regard to that war on her door-step have indicated extreme self-restraint.'

Analysing China's relations with its neighbours, Maxwell says that these can be seen as 'strictly reciprocal' : 'it is not what a neighbouring government is in its political complexion that modifies Peking's approach to it, but what that government does.'

Referring to the case of Pakistan the same expert says : 'There is nothing in Pakistan's military regime that could appeal to the Chinese, but since the early 1960s after a long period of very cold relations in the fifties — Pakistan has approached China as a friend and China has reciprocated.'

The observations of Neville Maxwell enable us to understand China's position *vis-à-vis* Bangladesh freedom struggle. The general support of the People's Republic of China to revolutionary movements in other countries never outstrips the limits (ideological and strategic) imposed by strict considerations of national state security. The specific stance taken in each case by Peking (of support or non-support or opposition) in regard to the revolutionary mass movement of a particular country is dictated by these considerations alone and nothing else. That had been so with the USSR as well in the past, even in those days when the Soviet Union was interested in supporting anti-

imperialist and anti-capitalist revolutions outside its border. Communist China's present attitude is no different. The Chinese leaders have forsaken the obligations of proletarian internationalism.

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 Stalin, in a study of the national question which appeared in 1913, defines the nation as follows: 'A nation is an historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.'—'Marxism and the National Question,' in *Works*, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, vol. 2, p. 307.
 Bukharin and Preobrazhensky in their *The ABC of Communism* — which was published under the guidance of Lenin in 1920 — define nation as follows: 'A nation or a people is the name given to a group of persons who are united by the use of a common tongue and who inhabit a definite area. There are additional characteristics of nationality, but these two are the most important and the most fundamental.' — Penguin Books, 1969, p. 241.
5. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, *op. cit.*, p. 246.
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9. *ibid.*, pp. 411-2.
10. Horace B. Davis, *Nationalism and Socialism: Marxist and Labour Theories of Nationalism to 1917*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1967, p. 193.
11. 'The Right of Nations . . .,' in *CW*, vol. 20, p. 400.
12. *Peking Review*, No. 46, 1966.
13. 'According to the Chinese Communist Party, the general line of the foreign policy of socialist countries must have the following content: to develop relations of friendship, mutual assistance and co-operation among the countries in the socialist camp in accordance with the principles of proletarian internationalism; to strive for peaceful co-existence on the basis of the five principles with countries having different social systems and oppose the imperialist policies of aggression and war; and to support and assist the revolutionary struggle of all the oppressed peoples and nations. These three aspects are interrelated and indivisible, and not a single one can be omitted. (*A Proposal Concerning the General Line of Communist Movement*, *



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Communist Party Publication, India, 1963, p. 28) So when a revolutionary struggle emerges in any country with whom China is not bound by the five principles of co-existence, China has not to consider the second aspect in formulating her specific foreign policy. But when such a struggle breaks out in a country with whom China is related diplomatically, the second aspect has to be considered. Though the general support and sympathy to the revolutionary people remains there always, *she is unable to voice her open support in the latter type*, as "it is absolutely impermissible and impossible for countries practising peaceful co-existence to touch even a chair of each other's social system." (ibid., p. 27) It is on these that China bases her specific policies, and she is doing exactly that when formulating her present policies regarding the struggles in Pakistan and Ceylon, with both of whom she has diplomatic relations based on the five principles of co-existence. That is why there is no open Chinese support for these revolutionary struggles and won't be either until the relations between these two types of countries change at the initiative of the governments of these semi-colonial countries.' (italics ours)—from a letter in *Frontier*, Calcutta, June 26, p. 17.

14. *The Guardian*, London, June 18, 1971.
15. Quoted in *Workers Press*, London, May 26, 1971, p. 2.
16. Hsinhua Selected News Items, July 21, 1969, in *Intercontinental Press*, New York, April 12, 1971, p. 327.
17. Quoted in *WP*, April 12, 1971, p. 4.
18. Quoted in *WP*, May 26, 1971, p. 2.
19. *ibid.*
20. Peking Home Service on April 28 told the Chinese people, who had no means of finding out the real situation in Bangladesh: 'Pakistani President Yahya Khan pointed out that there is only one reason behind such open and shameless interference by the Indian government—that is to further aggravate the situation through instigating and materially supporting a handful of people to create turmoil... The barbarous interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan by the Indian expansionists and the two super-powers will definitely lead to their ignominious defeat.' Quoted in *WP*, May 26, 1971, p. 2.
21. *WP*, May 5, 1971, p. 4.
22. For the declaration of the EPCP (ML) published in its official organ, *Ganashakti*, April 12, 1971 and local Maoist analysis of the struggle in Bangladesh, see *Purba Bangla Prasange*, as anthology of articles published by *Anik* (a Bengali journal), P. O. Khagra, West Bengal.
23. For the CPI(ML)'s point of view, see *Liberation*, Calcutta, vol. 1, No. 4.
24. John Gittings writes in *The Guardian* (June 18, 1971): 'China has also declared its hand in Ceylon, lining up with all the other Great Powers in support of Mrs. Bandarnaike against the Guevarist Janata Vimukti Peramuna (People's Liberation Front). This was done in another letter from Ghou En-lai which, like his letter to Yahya, was not published in the Chinese press. As in the case of East Bengal, the rebels in Ceylon were described by

Chou as only a "handful of persons" but this time Chou invoked the authority of Chairman Mao himself in order to slap them down. China, he said, was glad to see that the chaotic situation created by these self-styled Guevarists had been brought under control. The Chinese people had always opposed both ultra-Left and Right opportunism in the course of their own revolution, thanks to the teachings of Chairman Mao. Chou's letter accompanied an agreement (which the Chinese press did publish) on further aid to Ceylon.'

From a *Times of India* News Service dispatch dateline Colombo, May 27 : 'China has offered Ceylon a long term, interest-free loan of Rs. 150 million to help it tide over the financial difficulties caused by the Guevarist insurgency. The Ceylon Government today signed an agreement with China for the loan. A portion of the loan will be given this month, it was officially said. The Chinese loan offer was made by the Premier, Mr. Chou En-lai, in a letter to the Ceylonese Premier, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandarnaike.'

25. *Purba Bangla Prasange*, op. cit., p. 8.
26. *The Statesman*, Calcutta, August 2, 1971, p. 9.
27. Reproduced in *The Call*, Delhi, vol. 23, Nos. 1 and 2, July and August, 1971.
28. Here Maxwell refers to Arthur Huck, *The Security of China*, London : Chatto and Windus for the Institute of Strategic Studies, 1970, pp. 51 ff.

ASIT KUMAR BHATTACHARYYA

Bangladesh : Problems of the Rural Economy

BANGLADESH has now come to stay. Academic economists in this country who would not discuss its problem even as late as 1970, now find it convenient to do so. No doubt with their highly developed skills acquired from abroad, they throw a lot of light on the problems of that war-torn but now independent country. An interest in the economy of Bangladesh or what was once East Pakistan is no longer a profitless enterprise, such as it was in 1964, when the present writer first initiated the debate in this country about the exploitation of that land.¹ It is just as well that the academic economists today ignore such pioneering efforts in their zeal for truth, which has to be selective to suit their purpose.

An example of such belated but profitable academic exercise that offers itself is Mr. Arjun Sen Gupta's two articles in the *Economic and Political Weekly* (November 6 & 13, 1971) entitled, 'Regional Disparity and Economic Development in Pakistan'. The study starts from the same premises as the present writer's study published in 1964 did. The assertion perhaps demands something in the way of an illustration or proof which follows :

BHATTACHARYYA 1964²

... Since partition a process of industrialisation and middle class educational progress has been initiated in West Pakistan based on ... exploitation of the resources of East Pakistan ... Not only is East Pakistan very much more undeveloped than West Pakistan, not only is this lag increasing with each passing year, its economy has been so distorted that its dependence on the western wing has now become almost absolute. Yet, the situation was very different when Pakistan first started its

career as an independent country. (italics added). Writing on West Punjab in particular, Spate observed in his *Geography of India and Pakistan* (1957), "Such organized industry as exists is closely based on agriculture either as a supplier of materials for processing or as a market for agricultural necessities..... West Punjab is as yet little industrialized, nor can it well be claimed that its potentialities for large-scale industrialization are great except possibly in Textiles.

How has the present change been brought about?"

SEN GUPTA 1971³

"When Pakistan was created in 1947, there was little in the nature of its economy which would have indicated the way its western wing could grow to dominate its Eastern part. It was almost completely an agricultural economy, with the East as the world's largest producer of raw jute and the west a major exporter of raw cotton..... Virtually all the manufactures used in Pakistan were imported.

It is important to emphasize this point to dispel the widely held misconceptions about Pakistan's economic development over the years of the history of this country after independence. Its western wing developed much more rapidly than East Pakistan in almost all the major fields of economic activity. But if one looked into the details of the initial conditions of Pakistan's development, in terms of factor endowments, resource position or growth potential, one could not seriously maintain that it was in the nature of things that West Pakistan should dominate the East or that a different set of policies could not have achieved quite a different pattern of regional development."

In spite of this basic similarity of premises however Sen Gupta concludes on the point of underfulfilment of the private sector investment in East Pakistan in the 3rd Plan of Pakistan thus :

....."When the availability of foreign exchange as well as the command over resources that planners could distribute between the regions increased, the government chose not to force the diversion of resources to East Pakistan but to liberalize controls and rely more on market incentives. But *the market was biased against East Pakistan.* ". . . . The target of private expenditure during the Third Plans was Rs. 2,200 crores expected to be equally divided between the two provinces. The realized private investment in East Pakistan was about Rs. 544.3 crores which was about one-third of Rs. 1620.3 crores invested in West Pakistan. *It is clear that the market still favoured West Pakistan.*"⁴ (Italics added)

It is because Mr. Sen Gupta has depended a little too much on other peoples' books and appears to have allowed himself particularly to be influenced by Gustav Papanek's book⁵ that he attaches so much importance to what he calls 'the market' whose character and constituent elements he does not examine. Papanek, who devotes a whole chapter (his last) to "The Social Utility of Greed" (his Chapter VIII, p. 226-270) understandably believes that "During the early period of Pakistan's industrial development, a greater measure of direct government investment was necessary because there was not enough competent private entrepreneurs with adequate capital", but "in the second half of the 1960's Pakistan might move further toward a system of indirect measures to influence prices, with a minimum of government ownership and management in industry and commerce." (Italics added) Though he is careful to add that "Even for Pakistan, this does not mean that the proposed system would have been equally appropriate in the past, or that it will be in the future," yet, his bias is clear throughout. It is simply that a free market economy balances private greed with social objectives by bringing about maximum possible 'economic growth' measured statistically without reference to social classes and regional disparities. The last however impinged on his consideration but here also his remedies remained the same.⁶ This bias stops him from examining the legal-political framework of the 'market' whose role he upholds. Yet, greater economists than Papanek, or even Mr. Sen Gupta — such as Karl Marx for example — did not think it beneath themselves to delve into details as are available from parliamentary Blue Books and similar documents to understand the course and character of an economy.

If the same procedure be followed to examine the problems of what was East Pakistan, one comes across such informations as I quote below which explain the real (as against the assumed) character of the market as it evolved in that part of the country. This is from the speech of Mr. Mujibar Rahman, Parliamentary Secretary for Industries to East Pakistan government, in the Provincial Assembly in December 1965.

East Pakistan's import from West Pakistan⁹

Item	Year	Amount in Rupees (Crores)
Cloth	1963-4	13.62
	1964-5	15.74
	1965 (till August)	12.73

Mr. Rahman further said :

"Requirements of cloth in the province [i.e. the then East Pakistan] are met apart from local production by importing from West Pakistan and foreign countries." He however added, that, "import of cloth from

foreign countries under normal licensing had not been allowed since 1956." (*Italics added*)

In the course of the same speech he further said,

"production of cloth in the province has been gradually falling short of requirements".

He adduced the following reasons for the state of affairs then existing : (a) high rate of wages (b) high rate of electricity charges (c) *high freight rate of raw cotton imported from West Pakistan*, (*Italics added*).

While a comparison of comparative wages falls no part of this paper, even if the existence of the so-called higher wage rates in East Pakistan be admitted, it can be easily explained by the higher level of prices of essential commodities (especially of Rice, Salt, Matches, Kerosene etc.) that prevailed in that region compared to the prices of the same essential commodities in West Pakistan.

The point to note is that the so-called market in what was East Pakistan was a protected market for West Pakistani manufacturers and exporters. This protected market was a direct creation of the legal-political framework for the economy imposed by the authorities seated in Karachi or Islamabad. The above speech also contains sufficient evidence and data to establish the fact that investments in looms and spindles for the manufacture of cloth in the then East Pakistan was rigidly controlled by the Central Government of Pakistan through its licensing policies. Thus the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of private investment programmes did not depend on hypothetical market forces which were on their part created by government policy, but more plainly, on the government policy itself. A monopoly for West Pakistani salt for example, was created in the then East Pakistan which suffered repeatedly from salt famine. A near monopoly was created for West Pakistani cement. Similar was the case with trucks and cars all assembled in West Pakistan, and sold in the East at a higher premium. The underlying mechanism of this can be understood not with reference to present day theories however sophisticated, but in terms of the mother country—colony relationship, such as existed between the U.K. and her American colonies, prior to American independence to which I had referred in my above-mentioned paper. A comparable mercantilist system was built up in India by the East India Company and an unawareness of the working of this system still bedevils many of our economists. So much for the controversies into which I had to enter in order to clear up the intellectual cobwebs now being spun so assiduously by a section of our theoretical economists. The scope of the present paper lies elsewhere. It is of historical interest now to go into the fact as to why what was East Pakistan, developed at a slower rate than what was West Pakistan. Perhaps the same American Economists who waxed so eloquent over "Pakistan's rather remarkable economic record"¹⁰ — referring of

course to the Pakistan that was — would do well to devote themselves to such studies. They have a lot to learn from political economy.

II

In this paper we discuss the rural economic problems of Bangladesh, which are built into the socio-economic structure of the land. We consider an understanding of the problems of its rural economy to be of basic importance, especially, before we start recommending programmes for the development of Bangladesh.

We identify the above through an examination of the following indices :

- (i) Demographic characteristics of Bangladesh with their built-in problems.
- (ii) The occupational structure of the population and its significance.
- (iii) The socio-economic framework of the rural economy.
- (iv) The food problem.
- (v) Some special problems — e.g. the flood problem.
- (vi) A note on jute economy after 1965.

1. *Demographic Problems*

Although in current statements, the population of Bangladesh is given out as 75 millions, we do not know how this particular figure is arrived at.¹¹ Since no census of population could be taken in the area in 1971, we give below the population growth figures and simple percentage growth of population from 1931 to 1961 below.¹²

Table —1

Year	Population	Simple percentage growth
1931	35.6	—
1941	42.0	18.0
1951	42.1	00.24
1961	50.8	21.00

Considering that population growth in the decade from 1941 to 1951 was kept stationary through the combined impact of the Bengal famine (1943) and two waves of exodus (1947 and 1950), there are reasons to assume that the extraordinary events¹³ (i.e. Exodus in 1964 and 1970 and the revolutionary war in 1971) in the decade between 1961-71 would have had the same results on population growth in Bangladesh. Yet, even if it were otherwise, if population in the region were to grow at a rate comparable to the one that actually prevailed in the decade between 1951-61, the population in 1971 would have been a little above 60 m. or 6 crores. In the absence of any acceptable data about current population figures, we prefer to hold our discussion on the basis of 1961 Census figures.

1. Even on the basis of 1961 figures we find that there is a *heavy population concentration and a low rate of urbanization* in what is Bangladesh to-day.

In 55 per cent of the area of Bangladesh (i.e. in 30414 sq. miles of its 55126 sq. miles) population density per sq. mile *exceeds* 1000. As I pointed out in my Simla paper, "East Pakistan has an average density of population which comes upto 922 per sq. mile and would come up to 979 if we exclude the river areas. The districts of Dacca and Comilla at the confluence of the Padma, Jamuna and Meghna have the highest population densities — between 1600 to 1800 per sq. mile. Population in East Bengal [being agricultural] has always tended to concentrate along the active rivers where land formation is still going on and water supply is abundant. Leaving Hill Chittagong, the lowest concentrations are found along the western margin from north to south, i.e. Dinajpur (655), Rajshahi (769), Kushtia (851), Jessore and Khulna* (526). These districts have a lower average rainfall and are far [to] the west of the main rivers. These districts are known to have been too malarious in the last 100 years.¹⁴ Only Sylhet at the eastern margin of the East Bengal plains has a comparably low population density."¹⁵

However, what is more to the point is the fact that this heavily concentrated mass of population is almost wholly rural. In 1961, urban population in the then East Pakistan was 5.2 per cent only of the total population. Between 1951 to 1961, urban population increased by 0.8 per cent (measured as a percentage of the total population) whereas the total population increased by 21 per cent. Of this low urban population (2.60 m. in 1961), very nearly a half — or 46.5 per cent to be precise (1.21 m.)—lived in the four cities (or three if we include Dacca and its river port Narayanganj as a single complex). These were :

Table 2¹⁶

Population in the big cities of Bangladesh

<i>Cities</i>	<i>Population in 1961</i>	
Dacca	...	556712
Narayanganj	...	162054
Chittagong	...	364205
Khulna	...	127970

Large areas were not served by any urban centres at all.

Throughout Rajshahi Division (Area 13347 sq. miles ; population

* Khulna is a special case with the forested and saline lands of *Sunderbans* in its south. Hence the low density for the district considered as a whole.

11.85 m.) barring the railway town of Saidpur (60628), only the administrative centre Rajshahi (56888) had a population above 50 thousand.

In Khulna Division (Area—12810 sq. miles; population 10.07 m.) barring Khulna, only Barisal which is not connected by any railways, had a population above 50 thousand. In the Chittagong Division also, (Area 17032 sq. miles; population 13.63 m.) barring Chittagong, only Comilla (54504) had a population above 50 thousand in 1961. And in the Dacca Division (Area 11937 sq. miles; population 15.29 m.) leaving the Dacca-Narayanganj Complex, only Mymensing (53256) had a population above 50 thousand.¹⁷ We thus find a basic pattern of a concentrated mass of rural population very sparsely served by any urban centres in the land. Such poor development of urban centres is one of the basic criteria of regional economic backwardness.¹⁸

2. *Work participation and dependence on agriculture*

The problem of this rural mass becomes clear when we examine the work participation rate and occupational pattern of the same population. This is given in the table below :

Table — 3
Labour force in Bangladesh or East Bengal¹⁹

	1951			1961		
	Percent of total population			Percent of total population		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
All Labour Force	54.2	5.0	30.7	54.3	10.4	33.2
Agricultural Labour Force	45.1	4.1	25.6	45.5	9.5	28.2
Non-Agricultural Labour Force	9.1	0.9	5.2	8.8	0.9	5.0

We deduce the following from the above table :

- (i) Work participation rate of the population is low —the total labour force forming about a third of the total population. This is comparable to the work participation rate of the north Bengal districts within West Bengal,²⁰ which is admittedly a backward region.
- (2) The slight rise in work participation rate between 1951 to 1961 is deceptive inasmuch as the entire rise in the W.P. rate

(i.e. 2.6 per cent of the total population) is accounted for by a rise in the agricultural labour force alone (i.e. 2.5% of the total population) while the percentage engaged in all non-agricultural occupations — industry, trade, transport services and construction, slightly declined during the period.

This state of affairs is certainly disquieting and makes a mockery of any claim about growth or development that may be made on the basis of production figures of this or that article of trade.

This is particularly so because of certain other demographic features.

It can be seen from Table III.5 of Sultan S. Hashmi's monograph entitled, *Main Features of the Demographic Condition in Pakistan*²¹ that between 1951-61 in Bangladesh, the percentage of the male population in the age bracket 0-9 increased from 28.4 to 38.1 per cent of the total population, whereas the male population in the age bracket 15 to 39 declined from 37.8 to 34.1 per cent of the total, during the same period. The same phenomenon holds true for the total population also.

Table — 4

Change in Age Structure—Both sexes

Age bracket	1951	1961
0—9	29.5	36.9
15—39	38.9	35.0

This loss of population in the age group of the adult and active population combined with a broadening of the base of the age pyramid, suggest a crisis in food supply. The adult and active population dies off at a relatively higher rate than others, leaving a more numerous working population with less body weight and height, thus requiring less food per unit of the same.²² It is also a matter of actual observation that the more backward a country or a region is, the broader is the base of its age pyramid. In other words, if m stands for the minor population (i.e. between the age brackets 0-10 or 14) and a for the adult and working population (in the age bracket from 15 to 40 years), there will be a greater tendency for $\frac{m}{a}$ to be more than unity, the more backward is the economy of the region/country under consideration. If the population changes indicate that the ratio is giving higher and higher values over time we can deduce that the region/country concerned, is falling more and more

backward, economically. This condition is found to obtain in Bangladesh.

3. We have already referred to the depressed condition of agriculture in Bangladesh. *This is characterized by extremely small holdings and widespread prevalence of share cropping in agriculture.* Some data (from 1960 agriculture census) regarding above are given below :²²

Land holding among land-owners

20 per cent had less than 1 acre of land ;

62 per cent had less than 2½ acres of land ;

82 per cent had less than 5 acres of land.

It should be noted that a 5-acre holding is considered an economic holding in India. Thus 82 per cent of land owning cultivators had uneconomic holdings if we stick to the Indian criterion.

Tenants

Among tenants 89 per cent worked on less than 5 acres of land.

<i>Land under tenancy</i>	<i>in million acres</i>
Total cultivated land in East Bengal (Bangladesh)	... 19.14
of which Land under tenancy	... 3.95
of which land under share-cropping	... 3.53

Landless labourers formed about 36 per cent of the peasantry.

About 85 per cent of the peasantry were officially acknowledged to belong to the class of poor peasants which includes two categories : (1) those who are landless (2) those who own less than 2½ acres of land. Permanently engaged agricultural labourers numbered 1.2 millions in 1960. No wonder that the peasantry was found to be heavily indebted.

Peasant Debts

Number of peasant families	... 3.02 millions
Total amount of peasant debt :	930.0 (Rs. Million)

Thus the average debt per peasant family was about Rs. 310/-. Forty nine per cent of land-owning families were found indebted.²³

Long standing Crisis : Historical Background

Here it is necessary to point out that the agrarian economy of what is Bangladesh to-day depending on a single cash crop — jute, — has suffered from a state of crisis over decades. This reached a breaking point in the 1930s under the impact of the great depression starting

with the wall street crash in October 1929. Vera Anstey, by all accounts an ardent supporter of the British *Raj*, writes the following on Jute and the economy of Bengal during the depression :

"The position was particularly bad in Bengal, owing to the dependence upon Jute cultivation and export at a time when there was depression in the Jute industry. In 1930-31, *the aggregate value of the Jute crop was not more than one fifth of what it had been in 1926*. The result was "financial paralysis" met by voluntary crop restriction and an appeal for Government assistance. The Mill industry was also severely hit, although the Jute Mills Association had adopted a policy of restriction (by a reduction in hours or by sealing a percentage of the machinery) ever since 1921. *Restriction thus arose out of prosperous times and arose out of the monopolistic position, which enabled the Calcutta Mills to influence prices by limiting output.*"²⁴ (Italics added)

In 1934 the Report of the *Bengal Jute Enquiry Committee* (1932) was published. It frankly admitted that, "The unfortunate jute growers were absolutely ignored and practically bled to supply the raw materials for the industry."²⁵ It may not be out of place to mention here that the industry — entirely under foreign monopolistic ownership and control, never made any losses even during the depth of the depression and the Government of Bengal in September 1938 passed an Ordinance to maintain this monopolistic structure which Anstey, in sweet reasonableness described as, "a threat..... to stimulate voluntary agreement"[!]

During the Second World War, the East Bengal districts were particularly affected by the 'Denials policy' of the then British Indian government, which by removing boats from this riverine area interrupted supplies and largely made the Bengal Famine of 1943 inevitable. The shortage of cotton thread and consequent unavailability of large fishing nets hit the fisherfolk hard who suffered terrible losses during the famine. The East Bengal districts were particularly hard hit by the Bengal Famine (1943) in which according to unofficial estimates 3 million people were allowed to die of starvation. Following this cataclysm, came the partition (1947) of India. Disruption of trade ties with India followed the devaluation of the Indian rupee in 1949 (which on its turn followed the devaluation of the British Pound Sterling) while Pakistan did not. It was during this period, when East Bengal's natural economic ties with the surrounding areas was cut off by force, that the so-called 'Pakistani market' emerged and Eastern Bengal became dependent on West Pakistan traders and suppliers. They emerged partially as manufacturers later in the 1950s on the basis of their monopolistic hegemony over the market. (This is one of the major factors behind 'the remarkable

economic record of Pakistan' about which Papanek and his friends went into raptures even in 1967. The emergence of this 'market' brought in its train endless sufferings for the masses of Bangladesh characterized by the terrible Salt famine in the early 1950s. The deprivation of the Jute growers which followed the development of this 'market' will be discussed later.

What we want to emphasize here is the fact that present day Bangladesh has inherited a long standing and deep-rooted crisis in its agrarian structure and agricultural economy. This built-in feature of its socioeconomy which affects wide sections of its population is the basic problem that its government will have to tackle first, if it tries to develop the economy of the land. We hazard the guess that repeated mass exodus and sporadic violence etc. which characterized the region during the Pakistani interregnum (1947-1971) had at its base this rooted agrarian crisis. Policies pursued by successive Pakistani governments and especially those adopted and pursued relentlessly during the Ayub regime only helped aggravate the crisis, by helping a section of the Kulaks to lord it over the land. That regime, in its attempts to contain the social tensions, inevitable under the circumstances, encouraged the Kulaks to grab first the lands of the so-called minorities and then could not stop them when the Kulaks turned to grab the lands of small and middle peasants with little 'regard' for communal ownership. Hamza Alavi elucidated the process in his penetrating analysis of the Ayub regime.²⁷

Food Crisis :

No wonder then that Bangladesh has suffered from a chronic food shortage. As it is, undivided Bengal suffered from a certain marginal shortage of food especially of rice and had to depend on rice imports from Burma in the years preceding the Second World War to meet its requirements. It is not unlikely that East Bengal also started with food shortage.

Ataur Rahman Khan, the Chief Minister of 'East Pakistan' on behalf of the Awami League for two years in 1956-8 mentions in his autobiographical account of his years in power, entitled, *Ojaratir Dui Basar*, that in 1956, the province (as it then was) was already in the grip of a famine when they came to power. So far as we can deduce, the food shortage which has been chronic in the past decade is increasing in magnitude with each passing year. In 1969, in his speech delivered on 28th November 1969, Yahya Khan admitted a foodgrains shortage in East Pakistan amounting to 1.7 m. tons and promised to import the same quantity.²⁸ Actual food production and imports into Bangladesh in the recent years is given in the Table below.²⁹

Table — 5
Bangladesh : Food Production and Imports

Year	Gross production in million tons	Net availability from domestic production	Imports
1	2	3	4
1949-50	7.27	6.54	N.A.
1954-55	7.50	6.75	N.A.
1959-60	8.69	7.80	N.A.
1964-65	10.31	9.28	N.A.
1966-67	9.50	8.55	1.03
1967-68	11.07	9.96	1.02
1968-69	11.27	10.64	1.12
1969-70	11.83	11.65	1.48
1970-71*	10.97	10.00	1.21

(*Figures for 1970-71 are estimates only according to S. R. Bose). See Ref. No. 29.

However, the production figures as given by S. R. Bose do not appear to be beyond doubt. In 1968 for example, as a result of repeated floods in July alone rice crops in 2.1 m. acres were reported to have been destroyed. (Equally Jute crop over 268 thousand acres were also lost.) As these losses were accompanied by private capital losses e.g. homesteads numbering 258.6 thousand were washed away, there are reasons to assume that rising production figures in the last three years of the last decade as given out by Pak Government agencies are questionable. Total losses of Bangladesh in July floods alone in 1968 are estimated at Rs. 64 crores (Rs. 639922500) while relief granted amounted to Rs. 5 crores only.²⁰ It should be remembered that floods combined in unabated virulence in subsequent years. A report published in the *Hindusthan Standard*, Calcutta on 23 September, 1970, quoting Pakistani sources mentioned :

"The floods had inundated vast areas in Pabna, Bogra, Mymensingh, Dacca, Kusthia, Faridpur and Jessore which is usually free of [from] such ravages."

"The floods may cause a loss of about one million tons of foodgrains and the total shortage in that case is likely to be about 2.8 million tons."

There are clear indications that with a steadily rising population and a more or less stagnant agriculture²¹ per capita availability of food declined in Bangladesh. However, what is more to the point is that the 'unbridged gap' in food supply or food availability appears to have increased in the region in recent years. We have already noted.

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that Yahya Khan himself admitted the need for importing 1.7 million tons of foodgrains in 1969-70. Against this, actual imports amounted to 1.48 m. tons only. In 1970-71, import requirements of food were estimated at 2.8 m. tons. Against this actual imports came upto 1.21 m. tons only.

In the current year (1972-73), Bangladesh is threatened with a famine²² and government sources give out import requirements for Bangladesh at 3 million tons for the current year which is at least a third of its net internal production.

Apart from stagnation in food production, agricultural stagnation of the area is brought out in the production figures for Jute, its major cash crop.

Table—6

Jute in Bangladesh (East Pakistan)²³

	Gross Production (in lakh bales)	Average Production (in lakh bales)	Comments
1946-47	68.43	55.0	Seven years of Muslim League Rule
1948-49	54.79		
1949-50	33.33		
1950-51	67.07		
1951-52	63.31		
1952-53	68.23		
1953-54	36.10		
1954-55	46.62	55.0	Five years of 'Instability'
1955-56	55.92		
1956-57	55.14		
1957-58	57.01		
1958-59	60.01		
1959-60	53.63	56.3	The first six years of Ayub regime. However, the production figure in the six years of Ayub regime was around 53 to 54 lakh bales only, if we leave out the exceptional year of 1961-62. Production level in 1961 suddenly jumped up by 12½ p.c. from the level reached in 1960-61, but kept on falling in the years that followed.
1960-61	56.25		
1961-62	63.00		
1962-63	58.75		
1963-64	53.28		
1964-65	53.00		

Referring to the *Economic Survey of Pakistan* 1963-4, the *Ittefaq*, Dacca, mentioned that the average production figures for Jute in 1957-8 to 1961-2 declined to 17.7 md. per acre from an average level of 18.3 mds. per acre prevailing in the five years from 1952-3 to 1956-7.²²

The crisis in the Jute economy of East Bengal as a result of snapping of trade ties with India by the Ayub regime after hostilities with India in September 1965 will be discussed later.

It is necessary to point out here that land use in Bangladesh is already very high as will be clear from the Table below :

Table — 7

Land use in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan)²⁴

		<i>Area in million acres</i>
Net Sown Area	=	20.5
Rice growing area	=	23.0 = 112% of N.S.A.
All other crops	=	5.0
Total Sown Area	=	28.0
Cropping Intensity	=	137 per cent of N.S.A.

In other words 37% of the land is at least twice cropped. Rice is already grown in 112 per cent of the N.S.A. Improvements in food supply can therefore come through :

- (1) Further extension of the total sown area by extending cropping intensity inasmuch as the N.S.A. forms 20.5 m acres of the 21.6 m acres identified as cultivable area in Bangladesh.²⁵ There is thus little scope for extension of cultivation in virgin lands.
- (2) Secondly, an improvement has to come through a rise in the yield per acre of land. This has been thwarted so far, largely due to recurrence of floods on the one hand and other socio-economic and administrative factors on the other, e.g. fragmentation and subdivision of land, lack of cooperative efforts among the peasantry, lack of field channels etc. with which we in West Bengal are by no means unfamiliar.²⁶

However, as has been mentioned already, the H.Y.V. programme in Bangladesh has so far been a failure. Success of that programme requires first of all a solution of the flood cum drainage problems of the region. Recurring floods which now devastate the area almost regularly

twice in the year—i.e. at the onset and at the period of the receding monsoon, make further investment in the kharif season in the form of H.Y.V. cultivation an untenable proposition.²² Moreover, floods in their train bring in widespread crop epidemic which elude control.

The Flood Problem

The extent of the Flood Problem can be assessed from the classification of cultivated area of Bangladesh (East Pakistan East Bengal) with respect of depth of flooding given by Ghulam Mohammad in an appendix to his aforementioned paper.

Table—8

Depth of flooding in cultivated area²³

Type of land	Area per cent	Million acres	Depth of flood
High	7.8	1.69	Above flood level
Intermediate	44.8	9.70	2 feet
Low	27.3	5.91	3 to 10 feet
Very Low	4.6	0.99	10 feet
Saline Tidal	14.6	3.16	Subject to saline tidal action
Hilly	0.9	0.20	x
All Types	100.0	21.64	x

It can thus be seen that normally about a third of the cultivable area is regularly flooded by 3 to more than 10 feet of water which in a 'normal year' would make aman cultivation uneconomic during the monsoon. If we add the area under saline tidal action at different parts of the year we find that 46.5 per cent of the cultivable area is subject to such natural hazards each year that cultivation in those areas becomes a gamble. Leaving the high and hilly areas which together form less than 10 per cent of the cultivable area, the fate of agriculture at present seems to depend on the success or otherwise of cultivation in the type of land identified as 'intermediate' in the table above, which forms about 45 per cent of the cultivable area and is flooded less than 2 feet in 'normal' years. However, such 'normal' years are increasingly becoming infrequent since the late sixties. To all this has to be added cyclone hazards as the area lies directly on the storm track of cyclones, emanating from the Bay of Bengal.

A solution of the flood problem is the first necessity for the economic regeneration of Bangladesh. As Ishikawa mentions : ... "basic investment in land for flood control and irrigation had been extensively carried out in the Tokugawa era which seems to have laid a foundation for the later upsurge of agricultural production."³⁹

A solution of the economic problems of Bangladesh necessitating first of all the rehabilitation of its agriculture would therefore require :

(1) At the technological level :

- (a) the solution of its flood cum drainage problems.
- (b) Coastal embankments etc. to protect inhabited areas from the destructive impact of cyclones.
- (c) Extension of irrigation from November to May.

(2) At the socio-economic level :

- (a) on the negative side : (i) elimination of share cropping.
- (ii) elimination of Kulak hegemony over the ownership of land, ploughing implements, livestock and rural lending ;
- (b) on the positive side : (i) Building up of recipient organizations in the countryside with the active participation of peasants to whom lands have been distributed and who have been organized through cooperatives.

All these would require not only massive efforts but coordination of such efforts at all levels between the administrative machinery and the people without which success would not be achieved. This is a task both political and economic as any effort for regeneration of the national economy is in reality.

A note on Jute after 1965

The other most important factor in agricultural regeneration of Bangladesh would be the guarantee of a profitable floor price of Jute to actual growers. One of the major factors which alienated the people of what was East Pakistan from the Pakistani complex was the continuous loss that they suffered through a continued and deepening depression in the Jute prices consequent on the snapping of all trade ties with India after the conflicts in September 1965. This is reflected first of all in the lowering of the floor prices of Jute fixed by the Pak Government which were observed more on their breach than in their observance.

Table—9

Floor price of Jute per md. in Rs.⁴⁰

1965	33/-
1966	31/- to 33/-
1967	26/- to 28/-
1968	26/- to 28/-

Press reports from what was East Pakistan then was replete with complaints about distress sale of Jute by jute growers at prices considerably below the floor prices fixed by the government.

On 28 September 1967, the *Dacca Sangbad* reported that at Mymensingh, Jute was being sold at Rs. 19/- to Rs. 23/- per maund while rice prices at the same time at various parts of the province ranged from Rs. 40/- to Rs. 50/- per md.

On 28 September 1967 the *Sangbad* reported that even in Narayanganj which was the principal marketing centre for Jute in the land, jute was being sold at Rs. 22/- to Rs. 25/- per md. In many parts of the mofussil, the paper reported that Jute prices ranged between Rs. 18/- to Rs. 22/- per md. (See Report dt. Oct. 4, '67 entitled *Pater Bajere Mandabhab Abuyahata* i.e. 'depression unabated in the Jute market.') The same report contained details about a total slump in the market for Jute cuttings of which India was the principal customer. On October 5, 1967, the *Sangbad* reported that in Bhola in Barisal district, Jute was being sold at Rs. 18/- per md. On October 6, the paper reported from Rangpur in North Bengal that Jute was being sold at Rs. 17/- to Rs. 21/- per md., whereas Rice was being sold at Rs. 45/- to Rs. 50/- per md. (The traditional ratio of Jute to Rice is 2 : 1). Prices prevailing in Madaripur and Faridpur were reported as Rs. 17/- to 18/- per md. The price situation of Jute worsened day by day. In Pabna jute was reported to be sold at Rs. 15/- to 18/- per md. on October 10, 1967. On October 11, the *Sangbad* reported that a md. for Jute was being equalled to 50 seers (when 40 seers are known to make a md.) and sold at Rs. 17/- to 20 per such a md. in Rangpur. The peasants were thus systematically cheated on both counts e.g. in regard to weight and price.

The situation, if anything, worsened in 1968. When in 1968 minimum Jute prices were fixed at the old level of 1967, the *Sangbad* on July 18, 1968 came out with an editorial the title of which can be translated as 'There is no provision for the protection of peasants' interests.' In it they commented as follows : "At present the production of a maund of Jute costs Rs. 30/- on an average. If a md. of paddy is priced at Rs. 20/- then a maund of Jute should in no case fetch less than Rs. 40/- per md. Even a child in a peasant household understands it, yet, the government does not."

In fact, far from understanding or appreciating the difficulties of the Jute growing peasants, West Pakistani monopolists found the situation a 'godsend' for their own enrichment. In 1968 autumn, Jute prices slumped even to Rs. 10/- per maund at certain outlying areas of the province. No wonder that the Anti-Ayub agitation gathered fierce momentum at the end of the same year. Already in 1967, press reports (from some of which I quote above) indicated that peasants had brought out processions in Jamalpur in Mymensingh district and other places

denouncing the government, big business and their combined purchase-cum-price policies. These forces gathered increasing strength as the situation went from bad to worse in the succeeding years. A rational Jute price policy is therefore one of the major pre-requisites for a successful agricultural policy for Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I must emphasize that this paper does not aim at being conclusive but seeks to open up debate on some aspects of the social economy of emergent Bangladesh which tend to be forgotten under various data regarding exports or imports or production figures of a few selected items of manufacture. While such data have their place in understanding the economic situation of any country, an understanding of the rural and agricultural economy of Bangladesh seems to me to be of primary importance since about 95 per cent of the population there is rural and depend on agriculture for their livelihood, in some form or other.

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Administrative Division	Area in Sq. miles	Population in millions	Total figure
Dacca Division	11937	15.29	15293596
Chittagong Division	17032	13.63	13629650
Khulna Division	12810	10.07	10066900
Rajshahi	13347	11.85	11850089

(Source : *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, January 1963 (Table 1-1), p. 2. Published by Director, East Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Dacca-2.

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K. MUKHERJI

Sector Mix—Choices before Bangladesh

1. THE NEW STATE of Bangladesh is in a somewhat unique position; this permits it to experiment with a large number of organizational types, when the problem is considered in its somewhat limited context of rebuilding the economy of the country. The basic issues can, no doubt, be put up in the familiar idiom of 'private sector versus public sector' or that of optimum organizational mix in a mixed economy. It is certain that such an idiom will be intelligible. But considered in an wider context, it is likely that such a way of looking at the problem will restrict the choices, and inexorably focus the attention on a number of false issues. It is best to squarely face the real challenges involved in the problems *per se*.

2. When all the options are really open, it becomes comparatively easy to see that the problem of the organizational norm is only a part of the bigger problem of efficient social structuring. The lightly plastered-over gaps that exist in the economic theory of organization thereby suddenly open up into yawning chasms, into which the Pigouvian¹ dichotomy of the enterprise level divergence between social and private marginal costs and productivity go down. The more basic issues of the theory of the firm and the integration of the firms into the theory of the market must, therefore, get involved. Nevertheless, in doing so, it must be borne in mind that the concepts of closed space and opportunity cost, affect the properties of the economic space in to-day's world, which cannot be regarded as Smithian² in the conventional economic sense. In the closed economic space of the modern underdeveloped world, extension of specialized co-operation between producer and consumer units is not simply imited by the size of the market, but also by the fact that the size of the market is restricted by the subsistence sector surplus.³

Unfortunately, no system of efficient internal general equilibrium has yet been evolved, on the basis of such descriptive categories as under-employment trap, backwash effect, vicious circles and so on, and it is precisely such categories, perpetrating, what has been called a dual economy, that the planners in a currently underdeveloped economy must deal with.

3. In such a background, propositions like economic organizations being by and large profit maximising enterprises, appear trite by themselves. The fact that summated values of profit streams would differ over different periods, particularly, when the flows are uneven and are required to be discounted at the current level of interest, as affecting organizational decisions, likewise do not appear to be the direction along which one may effectively move, in creating a collective synthetic picture of the reality. On the contrary, it seems more important to look into the subjective attitudes of the producer-consumers to such issues as income and wealth, and pose questions about complementarities of efforts and commodities, at a much more fundamental level of human organizational system building.

4. Business enterprises with a clear objective function of maximising profits has turned out to be an elusive concept, notwithstanding the theoretical failure of the Hall and Hitch type of alternative policy formulation goals.⁴ On the other hand, the Hotelling-Lerner theorem of optimal public sector pricing is now recognised to be applicable to the short term requirements alone.⁵ But such propositions become applicable at an organizational level which has very little relevance to the underdeveloped environment. It is not quite certain that it makes more sense to say that a more relevant and general objective function for enterprises is to satisfy.⁶ Most of what the enterprises are required to do in order to be able to satisfy, would anyway involve producing a larger surplus.⁷

5. The issues start breaking up not only so much because there are deeper social psychological organizational goals independent of profit of satisficing motives, as manifested in the army, church or the political parties, but also, and more specifically, because the so-called external and internal economies at the enterprise level are essentially a false dichotomy, crucially affecting the parameters of the enterprise level uncertainty on the one hand, and opens up vague vistas of extra-economic organizational norms on the other, whereby not only collusions but also destructive strategies obviously enter into the game. The crux of the problem lies in the fact that the behavioural organizational theories are, as yet, purely at their formative stage, and cannot be applied with any accuracy in the operational world. The barrier of the common language between behavioural theories and the decision theory areas is not getting bridged quickly enough.

6. The basic issue, when the problem is posed in this manner, is whether the fact that Bangladesh is starting its socio-economic life more or less from scratch, tilts the arguments in favour of a much deeper and wider commitment in support of building up a greater part of the large-scale superstructure as a part of the public sector. The obvious second order question would then relate to which particular form the public sector activities should take in which area, and what should be the principal mode of co-ordination between their activities. That is, of course, if the answer to first question is materially in favour of organizing a greater part of the economic activities within the government sector. Does economic logic point quite decisively to such a choice? Does such a choice reasonably ensure that the apparently unnecessary and false dichotomy involved in the expression 'social justice versus economic growth', is avoided thereby?

7. The answers are, by no means, obvious. In the purely abstract conceptual level, whatever is possible in a market economy is apparently also possible in a planned economy. In turn, planning and planned activity co-ordination is, in principle, undoubtedly easier if the bulk of the activities is within the government sector. Further, the so-called divergence between social and private cost and benefit, as also the issues relating to the social, as against personal, rates of time discount, can be taken care of, much better, in a planned public sector dominated economy. All these arguments add up to a formidable array in favour of public sector domination. But is it quite certain that the arguments, singly or as a whole, clinch the issue? In the first place, the principles remain wholly silent about the organizational forms that the public sector activities are to take. What is undoubtedly more important is that while planning and public sector management assure that certain objectives can be attained, they do not, necessarily assure that they shall be attained.

8. Between the potency and the existence, between this essence and the descent, falls the shadow.⁸ What kind of a shadow, can and does fall, can be analysed in, at least, three levels of abstraction, involving many permutations and combinations, dragging in the theory of social structure and time, including the basic problem of historical sequence. In the inverse order of generality the three levels can be designated as : (i) the purely economic arguments, (ii) the arguments relating to the extra-economic theories of organization, and (iii) the arguments relating to the conceptualization relevant to social analysis in any loosely integrated system. The three sets of arguments may be taken up by turn.

9. The first serious theoretical economic argument appears in the form of the essentially short-term nature of the Hotelling-Lerner theorem about public utility pricing. Not only does the optimality of marginal pricing rule fail in the medium and long run, but by ignoring them, it

also runs contrary to the customary assumptions about the social rates of discount being lower than the personal rates of discount. In case the public sector undertakings are to recover their capital, what pricing rules are they to follow? In a capital shortage economy, if they are to maximise their return on capital, which is *prima facie* the efficient allocation rule, can public sector undertakings have significantly different objective functions as compared to large private undertakings, where there is more or less complete separation between ownership and control?⁹ Economics does not, as yet, provide any clear answer.

10. The second economic problem *per se* relates to the issue of the near impossibility of measuring and ultimately summing the benefit flows. The argument that private business has the same problem does not seem to provide an adequate answer, if only, because a private entrepreneur has to have only a rough estimate of his private gains in respect of its lower limits alone. It is quite a different matter that he should be able to make an exact estimate, provided he is really to maximise profit. Moreover, the private entrepreneur is relatively free to truncate his alternative streams, more arbitrarily, as compared to a social engineer, exactly because he can use his private maximization period or the rate of discount, which, his national planning commission counterpart, cannot. Similarly, the private entrepreneur is free to use the given opportunity cost of capital, as against the abstract own-rate for the economy, even though he is thereby becomes subject to the caprices of the banking systems' idea of a satisfactory interest rate and the changes therein, to a much greater extent. Thus, though the private entrepreneur is more likely to be wrong, as well as to diverge to a greater extent from social optimality, he has a firmer basis for immediate action.

11. Quite apart from whether profit maximization is an operationally feasible goal, is the general social issue, namely, whether profit maximization is a wide enough organizational goal. Even apart from the confusion over the time period over which profit maximization efforts may be aimed, there is the question of social structuring. The atomised economic man would not hold water, even for five minutes, outside the pages of undergraduate text books. A man maximises welfare not for himself, but for his wife and children. In different social environments, this span may conceivably be more or less. The caste, or the tribe may affect economic decision parameters materially. How does the subsistence level producer consumer act? In a more modern context, what is the nature of the objective function that a large corporation attempts to maximise? Does it involve the maximization of the aggregate of the dividends, the retained profits and the overhead expenses, or only of one or the other of these, subject to some constraints in respect of the others?¹⁰

12. Once the realm of the structured organizations is reached, it

becomes necessary to consider the non-economic and extra-economic factors affecting the behaviour of human groups. There is no doubt that factors other than economic motives affect human group formations. Are these factors more primary or basic, as compared to the economic motivations? Does satisficing differ materially from profit maximization, or can it be included as an additional dimension under it? Does the behavioural theory of the firm contradict the conclusions derived from the economic theory of the firm? If it does, it seems possible that the behavioural grouping is motivated by uncertainty minimization rather than profit maximization.¹¹

13. Considerations such as the above lead one to the basic issues of conceptualization in the social sciences and particularly in economics. It is not easy to pronounce a judgement on whether work and wages can be functionally related, as an integral part of social description and engineering, under all manner of human and social environment. Such propositions as disutility of labour, divergence between labour and work supply, backward sloping supply curves, the under development equilibrium trap and a whole lot of conceptual formulation are undoubtedly based on very flimsy factual and empirical evidence.¹² Do people work more when they are better fed and are more educated? Is motivation an autonomous, cultural or educational factor, or is it a dependent variable critically affected by the ownership of the means of production? Are human wants lexicographic and temporally independent of the individual's rationality chain? Enough does not seem to be known about any of these propositions, to enable the social scientists to recommend specific courses of action.

14. A great deal more of basic thinking seems necessary, about why and how individuals and human groups operate, so as to enable the social scientists to understand the working of the socio-economic systems at the macro level; and even deeper studies are necessary for the identification of the independent and operational variables in the systems. There does not seem to be any workable alternatives to each nation or each society seeking to understand its own working. In the realm of operationally meaningful conceptualization, it does not seem to be possible to borrow know-how, and however untrue it may be in the case of the pudding, where any one can make it edible if the recipe is known, the proof of social science validation, is in the eating; or, in other words, in its operational success.

15. Where do all these considerations leave Bangladesh in? As far as the pure logical structure goes, nowhere in particular. But economics and social engineering is not really concerned with pure reasoning. It is also unfortunately a fact that it is easier to pay a terrible price in chaotic destruction, than organize for a much smaller payment, for sustained social construction. If the adage, 'peace has its

heroes no less glorious than war' is palpably untrue, that economic development can have any such heroes, is more likely to be manifest in its negation. There is no doubt that Bangladesh will find it much more difficult to unite for economic reconstruction, than it has found to unite for its deliverance from Pakistani oppression. Similarly India will find it far more difficult to help in reconstruction, than she has found to help Bangladesh in her deliverance.

16. In this background, what should be the optimum public sector activity level and what should it aim at, in the Bangladesh reconstruction programme. The solution is, in fact, offered by the limitation of choices available, given the technology and organizational gap. It would be difficult for Bangladesh to opt for organizational goals and objective functions in purely economic terms. This should clearly involve that the organizational goals should be social and human group formation oriented. In fact, it really is so, but only overlaid with somewhat vague and non-operational economic conceptualization. This reality will have to be clearly grasped and acted upon. The crucial point is whether such a course of action will lead to a crisis in motivation. If the answer is that it will not, so far so good. If it does, and there lies the real danger. What compensating actions can the government take, in order to assure that a minimum of economic efficiency is achieved?

17. Such a line of action implies that the comparatively barren 'public sector versus private sector' debate should be avoided. All economics are by the logic of economic compulsion mixed economics. The key sectors to be developed in the public sector should be, apart from essential government services, the financial institutions including banking and insurance, and, foreign and wholesale trade. An extraordinary emphasis should not be given to the so-called heavy industries, or for that matter, the industries concerned with manufacture of complicated and sophisticated final products. Education, particularly at the primary stages, as well as medical aid, should be wholly in the public sector. It may be desirable to have picture and drink (soft and hard) houses wholly in the public sector as well. Apart from nationalized banking, insurance, including life, general and crop and the international, wholesale trade and warehousing, which may be organized as government sponsored corporations, the rest of the activities should be run on a departmental basis, with the possible exception of cinematograph exhibition.

18. The crucial decision will, therefore, relate to the structure and organization of the bureaucracy. Once again, the discussion in this context should not be allowed to run into the comparatively barren channel of committed versus neutral bureaucracy. There is nothing to prevent a bureaucracy from being both committed and neutral. But it is desirable to avoid the so-called *Ghulami* tradition, all the same.¹³ The bureaucratic salary should be pitched low and the range should remain closely

limited. At all costs, the class I to IV tradition should be avoided from the very beginning. As far as possible, the entire bureaucracy should be of a single class, with minor functional modifications. A separate administrative cadre-cum-elite should not be permitted to emerge, so that very considerable switching should not only be possible but also actually attained as between the academic, technical and administrative bureaucracy.

19. Such a structure, however carefully and seriously regulated, would still undoubtedly lead to a sharp class distinction between the bureaucracy on the one hand and the small peasants and the landless labourers and lower tertiary service labour force on the other. The temptation to avoid this by specific tax concessions or implicit subsidies to specific groups to bridge such a disparity, should be avoided as far as possible. Serious attempts must be made to fill the gaps in terms of provisions for social consumption in education, public health and other essential social service and infra-structure of a general character.¹⁴ All this will crucially depend on the political leadership and its capacity to bind itself by its own norms. This is the first essential for a democratic society working under a rule of law, and in this matter admiration for Indian achievements should not blind the Bangladesh leadership to the most glaring Indian failures.

20. Organized in this way, the bulk of agriculture, inland fishing, road transport for passenger services and retail distribution, and a majority of small-scale consumer goods production as well as tertiary services will remain with the private sector. In so far as foreign collaboration and large scale production becomes unavoidable, agreements must take sufficient care so as not to upset the income distribution pattern and strain the social system over much. In other words, Bangladesh must opt for a reasonable degree of autarchy, to enable the internal price system to work with reasonable efficiency. Whether such a system succeeds, will depend crucially on how the political elite actually behaves, and what degree of relative austerity it can accept for itself, without losing its clan.

If social experience is any criterion, the odds are fairly against any kind of efficient organizational set up being achieved. It is, however, fortunate that history does not really repeat itself.

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A. M. ZAHOORUL HUQ

Educational Reconstruction in Bangladesh

I INTRODUCTION

PROPELLED PRIMARILY by modern technology, the world has reached a stage where almost every society is finding it necessary to think seriously about the best way to educate its children and youth. It is perhaps wise to admit that no society finds it easy to arrive at the best solution in this matter. One of the reasons of failure to obtain the most satisfactory answers to the problem in this field is the necessity to move in a complex multidimensional domain. To start with, one has to think of the problem of the physical facilities required for imparting education in all the different levels and fields,—the buildings, furniture, educational equipment, libraries, laboratories and the rest. Next comes the problem of deciding upon the most suitable and desirable material to be offered to the children and the youth—knowledge and information (and perhaps entertainment), that will serve to develop them into properly educated persons of desirable character. (We need not get involved in the most elusive problem of what makes a person really educated, or more generally, of what the ultimate purpose of education is.) Thirdly, the most pertinent question of how the entire educational enterprise of a society is to be most effectively geared to the ultimate material and spiritual advancement of a given society demands definite and tangible answer. Besides these few problems of a generalized nature, there are quite a few other related matters of a specific nature which have to be urgently tackled with in order that an educational planning may be successful: good teachers in sufficient number, availability of text and

reference books, audio-visual aids, and even recreational and extra-curricular provisions, to mention only a few of the different aspects of a students' life in a modern society.

If ever all these problems were a thousandfold multiplied and faced, as disturbing nightmares, by any person who had anything to do with educational activities, it was in Bangladesh of the past few months, after this country has attained independence following one of the strangest and firecest struggle in human history. The price Bangladesh paid in terms of lives and materials is almost beyond calculation, but that story need not be repeated here. As in every other single aspect of her life, Bangladesh is striving with superhuman zeal and energy to reconstruct its shattered educational structure. In order that it may be possible to evolve the most effective strategy required to achieve not only the quickest but also the most desirable recovery—and perhaps it would be a revolution—in the educational field, it may be worthwhile to undertake a brief survey of the deliberate and barbaric ravages perpetrated by the enemies of freedom, one of whose primary targets was the total destruction of academic life in Bangladesh.

II THE DESTRUCTION OF EDUCATION

It is unbelievable nonetheless true that the enemy burnt or destroyed in various other ways, more than three thousand educational buildings between 25 March and 16 Dec., 1971, the day of liberation. These structures include even primary schools in villages and towns, where the students were innocent children not above six or seven years of age. Many secondary school buildings were deliberately destroyed on the suspicion that these might be sheltering the freedom fighters, a large section of whom were boys of school-going age. Hundreds of other school and college buildings were occupied and were made centres from which operations were directed against the people of the locality; whenever it became necessary to retreat in the face of the onslaught of the Mukti Bahini, these costly buildings were destroyed without a moment's hesitation.

It is needless to mention that during the occupation of these educational buildings, not the slightest attention was given to the protection of school furniture, and other school equipment. The school and college libraries were destroyed, either deliberately, or as a result of carelessness. This loss of furniture, equipment and books would run to a few million rupees,—but more importantly, any attempt to replace these equipments would necessarily require a considerable period of time. The effect of such a poor state of the physical facilities of the educational enterprise in Bangladesh is bound to be reflected both on the quantity and quality of education that can be offered in the country for quite a

number of years in the future. Moreover, as this country is dreaming of spreading education on a much vaster scale than was ever done in this region, under a socialist economic and political structure, the demand for education will soon be rising sharply, but the facilities for providing education will perhaps remain curtailed seriously for a long time.

Add to the above deplorable state of the physical situation in the educational life of Bangladesh, the infinitely sad fact that hundreds of teachers in all levels of education have been most mercilessly killed by the occupation army in their planned programme of seriously crippling,—perhaps, of wiping off—the intellectual and educational future of Bangladesh, and a faint idea will be obtained regarding the vastness that educational problems in Bangladesh have reached.

And not only the loss of hundreds of dedicated and brilliant teachers, but also the direct losses suffered by thousands of students in the schools, colleges and universities must also be considered. Even those students who could not take part in the actual fighting, had to leave their homes along with their families. Their books, clothing, and every single piece of educational equipment have been burnt with their houses, or looted, or finally stolen. Thousands have spent long nine months in refuge in India as destitutes, with almost nothing to call their own. Many have lost their parents and or brothers and or sisters under the most tragic circumstances. The unimaginably horrid experiences through which these young minds have gone, have left undesirable effects on their mental states. The uncertainties, the serious dislocations, the time lost, the delays caused in the holding of annual examinations at different levels, and in general the disruption of the normal academic atmosphere to which they were hitherto accustomed, are very likely to influence their mental and intellectual development in an adverse way. The educators in Bangladesh have also to remember these psychological aspect of the problem while thinking of the future of education in the country.

But the most serious aspect of the complex and tragic situation is that a large number of students throughout Bangladesh have lost their fathers or guardians on whose earnings their education solely depended. For those who were lucky not to have been orphaned, the financial situation is not much better ; if anything, perhaps, worse : the family has lost the house, or its entire savings or other properties. For the agriculturists, there has been no sowing and harvesting ; or the crops have been burnt or looted or stolen. Such students have no financial support to hope for, in order to enable them to go back to schools, colleges or universities ; and the cost of education, including residential accommodation and meals have risen sharply after the economic disorganization in the entire country. Education will perforce be stopped for thousands of students, and these frustrated despair-

ing young souls will be thrown upon the job-hunting world in which the number of jobs going around seem already to be too few.

III HOW TO RECOVER

Having briefly looked over the ruins of the educational edifice of Bangladesh, the question that immediately arises is : how to reconstruct the educational structure from the ruins? And when one remembers the present deplorable state of the student population of Bangladesh, the thought that immediately rises in the mind is that, if at any time in any country the need for completely free education for everyone became supremely necessary and desirable, it is now, in the newest nation of the world, Bangladesh. And, considering the framework in which Bangladesh finds itself now, the thought, although it might sound too grandiloquent, is neither too revolutionary, nor unduly unrealistic.

It is known to everyone familiar with the administration of education in a developing country, that expenses incurred by Government in the institutions of higher learning, such as general universities, engineering universities and colleges, medical colleges or institutes are much higher than what is earned from the students as fees: the total amount paid by students for their education at these levels is indeed so meagre that it could be considered as free, and even if the tuition fees were waived, it would make very little difference in the Government budget.

Bangladesh is pledged to the establishment of a socialist economy, and to this end nationalization of the basic industries and other commercial and financial enterprises has already been effected. It could also be said that all the institutions of advanced education in Bangladesh have also been already operating as nationalized organizations. Although the six universities of Bangladesh—including one engineering university and one agricultural university—are autonomous bodies, the finances are provided entirely from the Government budget. Three engineering colleges, and more than half a dozen medical colleges have been installed and are run entirely at Government cost. A large number of degree colleges and schools are also Government institutions. It may be predicted that to keep true to the promise of creating a socialist state, and also as a necessary and desirable step towards the achievement of such a state, Bangladesh Government will soon find itself committed to the responsibility of providing entirely free education at all levels to all deserving children and young boys and girls. I am using the qualification 'deserving' quite advisedly. For, the moment that Bangladesh gets committed to the dispensation of free education in the country, the most efficient utilization of the national resources invested in the enterprise will be solely the respon-

sibility of the State. It will therefore be imperative on those responsible for the administration of education to set up very strict standards to select students fit to receive education, as considerable sums of money will be involved for each student throughout his career. We need not go into the details of finance that will be involved; it is for the educational planners to take up the exercise. The above statement should not however be construed to be a hint that, since the state will have to invest huge resources to an apparently unproductive enterprise, the spread of literacy or of higher education should be severely curtailed. Far from it. But it will certainly be the moral obligation of the Government to ensure that the investment is wise, and productive, in the special sense that good education can be ultimately of great use for the individual and the community. Even under these constraints, the basic duty of providing for a useful degree of literacy for all citizens should never be forgotten. And in order that literate persons may also be gainfully employed in the social system, vocational education in a very wide variety of fields for the largest number of students should be available free and without restriction. It is only at the highest level of education, at the universities, medical and engineering and agricultural colleges that only the most brilliant and promising students be admitted and financially supported. How many or how few students are to be admitted in the centres of higher learning is to be carefully determined so as to obtain high correlation between the need for trained manpower in various fields of the national life, and the output of these centres of learning. (I shall hasten to add that the need of highly educated manpower in the various fields of liberal arts—literature, economics, history, philosophy etc.—should not be lost sight of.)

It will thus be quite clear now that Bangladesh will soon have to enter into an era when nothing but an entirely new strategy in the field of education can be successful. And needless to add, the administrative machinery required for satisfactory implementation of the policies born from the new philosophy and strategy for education, will require a character completely different from what it has hitherto been. The 'management' of education, which will involve problems of unprecedented nature and of a much vaster scope than now, will certainly call for the services of highly trained and inspired administrators. Therefore, the educational system in Bangladesh must also keep in view the production of good educational managers so that the systems itself may keep functioning at the optimum level.

Any attempt to discuss the problem of financing all the educational schemes on a much wider scale than before would be beyond the scope of this essay. The need for a very much larger allocation of finance in the education sector will arise precisely at the moment when, due to the

unimaginably pitiable condition that Bangladesh finds herself in as a result of the ravages of the war of freedom, the demand for finance in almost all sectors of national life is equally strong, and perhaps as urgent. The Government will, of necessity, fix priorities very carefully, and because of the fact that the investment in education, by the very nature of things, is bound to be a long-term enterprise, where the product is neither immediately visible nor directly measurable in terms of "Gross National Product", it is probable that education might appear somewhere near the bottom of the list of priorities. It is in this context that all educationists in Bangladesh will feel morally bound to sound a note of warning : unless the Government of Bangladesh adopts a completely revolutionary philosophy in this respect and the economists of the country adopt a way of thinking quite different from the conventional one, the foundations on which the country now stands, the whole fabric may be severely shaken before long. I shall go to the extent of making the remark that, considering the circumstances in which Bangladesh has been born and is likely to find itself in for quite some time, it is absolutely necessary that education in Bangladesh receive the same priority as its Defence : the awakened, inspired and properly educated people of Bangladesh will be its best defenders.

IV SCIENCE EDUCATION IN RECONSTRUCTION

It is needless to emphasize that science and technology will play a predominant part in the reconstruction of Bangladesh as they indeed do in every country. The role that will have to be assigned to science education in the general framework evolving out of a new educational philosophy for Bangladesh, therefore, needs careful consideration.

It has been mentioned earlier that, the most extensive provisions must be made for vocational education in Bangladesh, so that science and technology are given the maximum scope for application in national life in order to generate the highest rate of progress towards better conditions in living while at the same time employment opportunities are available to a large proportion of the youth of the country. Science educators in pre-independence Bangladesh have been often heard to regret the fact that, by and large, the efforts in the task of imparting science education to the youth of the country have so far been fruitless. Science and technology have not been able to produce a "lift-off" either in the economic field, or in the intellectual sphere of the nation. The reasons are not far to seek : firstly, science education in the country has not been properly oriented with respect to the needs of the country ; and secondly, persons educated in science have rarely been employed in a way so as to secure the maximum benefit for the society. The only lesson that can be derived from the situation is that science and science

education in Bangladesh should be managed, at least for the next decade or so, solely with the aim of extracting the greatest return from it in so far as the wellbeing of the new nation is concerned. Science curricula and science teaching should be geared firmly to this 'utilitarian' philosophy regarding science and technology : the rest of the management aspect of science education should be worked out by education administrators within this framework.

This is not to deny the role of research in the pursuit of science : fundamental research is in fact responsible for significant advancement in the field of science. But keeping in view the very special circumstances that Bangladesh finds herself in at the moment, it will perhaps be in the best interest of the country, to keep fundamental research limited to only a few laboratories, in the hands of only the most capable scientists. Or in other words, the bulk of scientific research in Bangladesh ought to be undertaken at present with the aim of solving myriads of problems that have been plaguing national life in almost every field of its existence. Research for the sake of research, ought to be discouraged, when the task before every one in the country is to see that life again rises from the ruins lying all around.

V CONCLUSION

No attempt has been made in this essay to suggest the outlines of a plan for the educational system of Bangladesh. The task is vast, and, no doubt, very complicated. The educationists and experts in this field will, in time, certainly evolve the most desirable, the most suitable, and the most fruitful system for Bangladesh, keeping in mind, I am sure, her past ; and committed to a future based on her avowed ideals. My chief aim here has been to point out that considering everything in the most recent past, Bangladesh is the strangest new country that was ever born, and the most desirable educational system for a country such as Bangladesh can only be born from an educational philosophy that will have to be quite new, and perhaps 'strange' in many ways. It will have to be new in the sense that its aim will be to produce a new type of citizens for the new nation ; and also somewhat strange, as the whole endeavour will have to be geared to the goal of achieving a democratic, secular and socialist Bangladesh,—all of which Bangladesh was not, ever in her past history.

SUDHANSU MOHAN BANERJEE

The Quest for a Cultural Identity

IN THE QUEST for a cultural identity of the Bengalis in the context of Bangladesh it is really significant that India and Bangladesh, two sovereign nations, have fortunately a common cultural heritage. In a tragic generation, Tagore's has been a magic name with a sense of belonging. I am therefore tempted to preface these talks with the beautiful lines :

The heroes' blood, the mother's tears
Shall they be valueless, tranced in fear
Will not Paradise Lost be bought and regained . . .

This subcontinent has been the cradle of civilizations, with waves of migration from places beyond its borders. The result was that in course of time, even in prehistoric days, distinct cultural patterns began to be evolved not only in the North with the Aryan advance but also in the South where a distinct Dravidian and Proto-Sumerian hard core existed when the Aryans infiltrated there, and in the Eastern region, where the Austro-Alpines, Negritos, Tibeto-Burmans, Dravidians and Aryans combined to create a distinct type. They were more non-conformists and we are told that Bengal was not originally within the "artic cradle" of Aryanism and was a place where one should not go without a mission of mercy or pilgrimage. The 'Vratyas' referred to in the Atharva Veda seemed to represent this mixed ethnic type, who rebelled against Aryan domination. When the curtain rose in the history of the Indian Peninsula with the Aryan advent and the Rigveda came to be compiled, with race memories of earlier generations spent either in their Artic homes, Central Asian Steppes, or Iranian fields we find no mention of Bengal. Rather there is a derogatory mention of

it in the Aranyakas. In the Mahabharata and Harivamsa there is a reference to five 'Kshetrāja' sons of Bali by the Queen Sudesna, the actual procreator being Rishi Dirghatama and they were named as Anga, Banga, Kalinga, Sumha and Paundra. Bali's kingdom was supposed to have been partitioned among these five sons and their geographical boundaries almost correspond to modern territorial distinctions which are easily identifiable as below :—

- (1) Anga—Modern Bhagalpur, Santhal Parganas, Maldah, Rajshahi and contiguous territories (later known partly as 'Kajangal').
- (2) Banga—The land east of the River Bhagirathi comprising most of the present Bangladesh (portions later known as Bagri-Bagadh, Samatata, Harikela, Diar-I-Bang, Vikrampur or Naba, East Bengal or Eastern Pakistan at different times).
- (3) Sumha—Most of Rarha—(Uttara and Dakshina) portions, later known as 'Dandabhukti' 'Bhurishrestabhukti' 'Kotibarsha' 'Saptagram' 'Tamralipti' 'Burdwan', regions of the Chandra King whose inscription was recovered at Susunia Hills, Bankura. It may incidentally be mentioned that Mahavira, the Jaina Tirthankar preached in Iadhya or Rarha and there are still traces of Jain culture in this region particularly in Purulia.
- (4) Kalinga—bounded on the south by the river Godavari, on the north by the river Subarna-rekha, on the east by the sea and on the west by the hills and forests.
- (5) Pundra or North Bengal or later known as Barendri, the best territorial limits of which could be defined by the pre-1947 Rajshahi division, plus Coochbehar and a part of the district of Goalpara and perhaps a portion of Murshidabad.

Before we discuss Bengal and her culture it is wise to state certain fundamental implications, which are often forgotten. No civilization in its widest sense is autochthonous, nor can it flourish within a cloistered shelter. Any particular human behaviour is the complex product of an impact, an interplay of different forces. History, as the late Henry Ford declared, might be bunk ; but it is the expression of a collective mind, the creation and emergence of new concepts, new ideas and ideals. The phenomenon of one group influencing another is not a mere historical accident, but a natural fact and a sociological necessity. Ancient Egyptians were influenced by Proto-Sumerians but they in their turn had influenced Babylon, Assyria and the Near East. The Cretans influenced the Greeks and Greece had influenced Rome and Persia and historians opine that Greece was influenced by Myceanians. Roman law, codes, and ideas are at the root of modern European civilization. Thus while we talk of Bengali culture, Assamese language, Telegu or Tamil literature or Maratha manners and Guzarati customs or North Indian social milev, we have to recognise that a narrow territorial patriotism is ruled

out and that we are in a sphere where we have to give as well as to take. A continuous impact is constituting an ever evolving process of adjustment. This is history's unending grandeur of integration. This very general principle has to be restated, because in our eagerness to prove a particular thesis, we are apt to lose sight of a basic concept. But at the same time, it is obvious that every civilization creates a style of its own and has its distinctive features. As Dr. Radhakrishnan points out, civilization is based on a dream. Its codes and conventions, its ways of life and habits of mind are poised on a dream. When the dream prevails, civilization advances, when the dream fails, civilization goes down. Arnold Toynbee has laid down another test of measuring it. "If we are attempting to ascertain the limits of any given civilization either spatial or temporal" we find as a matter of fact, that the aesthetic test is the best. It speaks in clearer accents than either politics or economics. Further, a study of history and culture is not merely a "resume" of the story of monarchs and generals, but a study in the evolution of literature, language, art, ethnology and religion and its reaction on the social structure and the body politic. Civilization is what we use, culture is what we are or become. Both in today's Bangladesh and that part of India, which comprises West Bengal and certain adjoining portions of present Assam and Bihar, a cultural cohesion did grow up as the result of a process of contact and intermingling through ages. Diverse races of different castes, creeds and colours converging on the land had evolved a sort of basic unity amidst diversity, though they had met at different levels of civilization and in different periods of history. This assimilative capacity was particularly observable in the Eastern region of this sub-continent. Each contributed its own share to the common pool. The vehicles through which the group mind primarily integrates are inter-marriage, friendly co-existence, similarity of social customs and practices following similar ideas and ideals, a common language, literature and religion. These values strengthen the social bond and though it may snap by invasion or conversion, by partition or secession, the social roots, if they are of sufficient strength, survive. That is what happened in Bengal. Kamrupa also came within this culture-belt.

When Islam knocked at our doors in the 10th and 11th centuries, we had three almost clear cut divisions : (1) North Bengal, (2) West Bengal, (3) East Bengal. All of them came under the generic name of "Goura-Banga" and the Kings belonging to the Guptas, Palas, Varmanas, Senas all came to be known as Goureswaras. According to Dr. R. C. Mazumder there is no doubt about the antiquity of Gaura, originally a small principality in the Murshidabad district. When Sasanka was the king of Gaura (referred to by Hiuentasang and Banabhatta), Banga was then ruled by a king known as Devakharga. Aryan infiltration in

Bengal had a two pronged course from the days of Buddha and Mahavira, one based on Mithila and going west towards Kamrupa through North Bengal. The spread of "Vasistha" cult in Kamrupa is perhaps traceable to this. Another thrust was South-West from Magadha to Rarha and other places and resulted in the spread of Jaina thought partially. In the Mahabharata we find the king of Banga fighting in Duryodhana's camp and Paundra Vasudeva was a strong rival of Shri Krishna, whose armorial signs he assumed. The whole of the region from Rajmahal to Rosang (Chittagong and Arakan) came to be later known as Bangla and even before Akbar made it 'Suba Bangla' as noted in 'Ain-i-Akbari' of Abul Fazal, a revolutionary change had occurred in the cultural integration of Bengal, with the advent of Islam. The delayed Aryanisation of Bengal was one of the reasons why it could retain stamps of individual distinctness from the rest of India though sharing in the common heritage, and she could also boast of rebel groups e.g. in "Vratyas". Bengal which ethnologically, linguistically, and from an anthropologist's point of view was a land of mixed races with of course Aryan dominance, had been spreading out throughout India by the 12th Century A.D. a process which continued afterwards also. A copper plate inscription found in Monghyr says that Devapala, son of Dharmapala, annexed the district of Pandya Kingdom and extended his dominion upto Rameswaram. In the Punjab the ruling families of small states like Suket, Keonthal, Kashivar, Mundi claim their geneological origin to the Rajahs of Gauda in Bengal. The 'Udichya' and 'Nagar' Brahmins of Guzerat, the 'Saraswat' Brahmin of Maharashtra, the Gauda Brahmins in Mysore or Madhya Pradesh, 'Sarala' Brahmins of Tehri-Garhwal all over their descent from 'Gaudiyas' apart from the fact that traditions of settlement of Bengalis, in 'Subarnabhumi', 'Sinhala', 'Tibet' 'Nepal', 'Kerala', 'Javadwipa' and 'Kamboja' are still existent. We find names of Abhigunakar Isandeva, Abhayankara Gupta (Oddantapuri monastery), mentioned outside Bengal not to speak of Atisha or Bitpala and others. We read of the famous story of Viseswar Sambhu who was a reputed Vedic scholar. The Chola and the Malwa kings were his disciples as also the Kakatiya king Ganapati of Warangal. The main fact to be noted about him is that he built not only temples and monasteries but full fledged Universities with complete course of syllabi and founded hospitals, maternity homes etc. The landgrants given by his patron kings in a village on the banks of the river Krishna testify to this. The advent of Islam in Bengal was also a matter of deep significance. It came as an invasion but stayed as a part of the social, economic and political set up of the people which though at the upper level claimed Aryan Origin could not forget its multi-social mixture at the proletariat level. The original autochthonous character of Bengali culture has to be underlined and naturally it was a mixed one to which both Hindus, Buddhists

Jains and Musalmans contributed making it a composite one. Social customs e.g. funeral patterns, marriage procedures, folk literature with words derived from elsewhere were the main components of this composite culture.

It has been stated by scholars that in the 'core' of its teachings, there is nothing in Islam which Hinduism cannot accept. "The early schools of Upanisadic mysticism, the Tantrik Chakras, the Buddhist Sanghas, the Vaishnava Gosthis and other similar circles or orders in Bengal were not bound by any rigid rules of admission of new entrants. Caste, creed or birth was never allowed to stand in the way of spiritual seeking". This has been attributed to an abundance of emotion in Bengali character which was manifest in her collective life and her composite culture. All conflicts could be resolved in this spiritual humanism. From the reputed utterance of the Prophet "I smell of a divine breeze of Allah's knowledge blowing from India" it can only imply that the spiritual truths of India were not unknown to him. The doctrines of Sufism were in many respects similar to those of Hindu devotional thought. Its emphasis on the love for the Divine mixes rightly with the Bhakti cult of Hinduism and Karuna and Maitree of Buddhism, upto a point. In the medieval age, the Sadhus and the Sants, the Pirs and the Fakirs were harbingers of this creed of love and faith and this fostered an essential oneness which was racially and ethnologically there to break the barriers of religious bigotry at least among the masses, though the classes, both Hindu and Mahomedan clung to their rigid creed typified in their Sanskrit and Arabic texts. As a matter of fact, the whole of the medieval period in Bengal (barring the Nawabs and Foudars, Zamindars and Naihs, and their political and credal henchmen) was marching towards a collective expression of the soul of Bengal—a synthesis through folklore ballads, social customs and finally through literature. Ibn-Batuta who visited "Benjala" in the middle of the 14th Century when the liberal minded Fakhruddin was the Sultan of Gaura, saw one hundred and fifty seats of Muslim Fakirs and Pirs from Pandua to Sylhet, Jalali pigeons (of Nizamuddin Aulia fame) which were the signs of an unseen bond between Hindus and Muslims. Moreover many of the converted Mahomedans were the descendants of condemned Buddhists who dominated the Eastern part of Bengal. Kavi Ram Chandra Bharati, though an ardent Buddhist, was typical of this cultural understanding. In the ballads of East Bengal, many of which were composed by Muslim poets, there are abundant references to the feelings of amity and common fellowship. Hindu poets would talk of Allah and Mecca, Mahomedans of Siva and Jagannath. During the reign of Husain Shah (early sixteenth Century) Hindu-Muslim relations took a definite turn towards a new cultural synthesis. Satya Pir cult grew in fashion. Folk worship of Manikpir, Ram Pir,

Kalu Ghazi, Olai Chandi, Ban bibi became common. Tinlak-Pir was none also than the Trailakya Nath or Tri-Nath of the Hindus. The followers of the Neda-Pir of North Bengal, identified Muhammad with Mahadeva and Fatima with Mahamaya. The influence of Hindu folk literature on the Muslim population was unmistakable. Hindu epic stories of Rama Chandra, or Bhima, Hanuman or Ghatotkacha, used to be relished by all just as 'Kechchas' of later Muslim writers on the analogy of Hindi 'Choupais'. The famous Bengal Sultan Ghiasuddin Azam Shah of Ilias Shahi dynasty did very much to rear up a Bengali spirit irrespective of race, caste or creed. He was a poet, a Ghazal writer and sent a line, as it is said, to the famous poet Hafiz for filling it up, at Shiraz. According to Dr. Mazumder this seems to be a true story and it is recorded in 'Riyaz-us-Salatin' and also in Abul Fazl's 'Ain-I-Akbari'. He was himself a 'Hanafi' but in the Mecca Madrassa, built by him he arranged to have lectures, on all the four schools of Islamic thought—'Hanafi', 'Shafeyi', 'Maliki' and 'Hambali'. It is stated that on the evidence of 'Tabaqat-I-Akbari' 'Tarikh-I-Ferishta', 'Maasir-I-Rahimi', 'Riyaz-us-Salatin' that probably due to the rebellion of Raja Ganesha, he became for a time Anti-Hindu. These Sultans were great patrons of Bengali literature and Hindu poets like Maladhar Basu, Bejoy Gupta received patronage of the Court. The break up of Pathan rule led to a decentralization of the patronage of Bengali literature but it flourished in the courts of Arakan (Rosang), Tripura, Cooch Behar (Kamta), Phursut (West Bengal) and other places. It has been argued that Aurangzib was responsible for making Muslims conscious of their separate religious and ideological identity. The call of the Semitic religions was often a call to their adherents to be united as Jews, Christians or Mahomedans, irrespective of where they lived or belonged. The identification consciousness with the country of their birth had not yet grown and religion seemed to be a better and a greater bond. When Mughal rule was disintegrating, the Marathas and the Sikh rose in revolt. Some say that they were apprehensive of Government being organised on Islamic lines. A theocratic state was supposed to be a *sine quonon* for a Muslim ruler, so much so that the respected Sufi scholar like Wali Ulla (1703-81) was induced to write a letter of invitation to Ahmed Shah Abdali to invade India to protect the Muslim position and Islamic interests. Sir Jadunath Sarkar quotes the following passage from Waliullah's letter—If, God forbid, domination by infidel continues, Muslims will forget Islam and within a short time become such a nation that there will be nothing left to distinguish them from non-Muslim. Hali (the poet) in a lucid and flowing verse spoke of rise and fall of Islam and he wrote in the preface—I have constructed a house of mirrors, in which the Muslims will find their faces and a lustre reflected and see what they were and what they have become. This is perhaps

one of the reasons why the British were welcomed into power by the Hindus of Bengal, particularly of the upper classes—landlords, money-lenders, Dewans and Baniyas more from their selfish interests, than the vision of a collective gain. There were exceptions no doubt in the early nineteenth century which produced a Rammohan or a Derozio or a Prasanna Kumar Tagore who thought the British advent was a God send mission to uplift the country and its consolidation as one unit, in the light of Western thought and culture. As a matter of fact these leaders were more enamoured of the Western civilization and looked upon the British as deliverers rather than as conquerors. Dr. R. C. Majumdar quotes a passage from Prasanna Kumar Tagore's writings—If we were to be asked what Government we would prefer, English or any other, we would one and all reply 'English' by all means, by even preference to Hindu Government, which shows how the atmosphere of the educated *elite* was tinged. This feeling had almost evaporated by the end of the century and though Bankim Chandra's *Anandamath* portrayed the rise of Hindu nationalism during the decline of the Muslim power in Bengal it was in fact symbolic also of the national feeling against British colonialism and imperialism in a camouflaged way. The fact was that during the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, the symbols used in the nationalistic movements (even of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo) were more or less Hindu Symbols, though their concepts of freedom gave us a vision of the oneness of humanity in the world of the spirit. It was Rabindra Nath Tagore who first drove home the point of a real Hindu-Muslim unity in a secular state. Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das was another political leader in Bengal who strove actively for that consummation and even in the height of the Gandhi movement, had the foresight to see that in Bengal the problem was more cultural rapprochement than scramble for power because our cultural roots were the same and it behaved not to have a merely Hindu revivalist movement. Moreover in Bengal we had shared the same cultural and linguistic influences. Yet the truth was that when the occidental challenge came, the response was given mostly by the Hindus and the cultural assimilation was confined mainly to the Hindu upper classes based on a Calcutta society and sponsored by men like Raja Rammohan Roy and others, with the result that the cleavage between Hindus and Mahomedans was sharpened. Though at first the British seemed to have sided with the Hindus for the propagation of Western literature, science etc., the picture changed after 1857, when the last bastion of the symbolic Moghul Suzerainty was demolished and Mahomedans were cultivated by the British officials as a balance of power against too much Hindu domination. The cultural history of Bengal followed this dualistic pattern till yesterday and led ultimately to the partition of the country.

The first partition of Bengal in 1905 which was merely administrative in character within the British frame work of the Indian continent really released nationalistic forces in Bengal including revolutionary activities. It has been claimed that a religious gloss was added to what was really only a minority's fear of losing its economic and political privileges. Their successes had far reaching results. From the resurgence of Hindu Nationalism which followed partition there grew tensions between the Hindu and Muslim communities which finally led to a greater partition in 1947. The cultural history of Bangla Desh then known as Eastern Pakistan, came to be a pawn in the demographic political picture of the Establishment ruling there and the *elites* holding sway. Pakistan was an independent state but not yet a nation, based on common links of language and race memories. Religion was no doubt an important factor of coalescing but repeated attempts on the part of the ruling classes were to foist an ideology foreign to Bengalis and to quote Osman Jamal "to negate all that is traditionally, perhaps essentially cumbrous even dangerous, cultural ties that exist between the two Bengalis." He further adds that "paradoxically, through the cultivation of his identity as a Muslim, the Bengali Muslim transcended his exclusively Muslim ego and became increasingly aware of his identity as a Bengali". Pakistan was born out of a negative urge. There were of course faults on the side of the Hindus too, who were culturally dominant. The language movement which was initiated immediately after 1947 became the spearhead of a real democratic restlessness. There were sporadic attempts made by the Pakistan Government from time to time e.g. to adopt an Arabic script, for Bengali translations of Bengali books into Urdu and Urdu books into Bengali, banning of Tagore's books and songs and re-editing of Nazrul's poems. These were bound to fail because they did not touch even the fringe of the cultural problem, which the newly arisen national mind was trying to evolve out of a common heritage where, in the words of the poet, narrow domestic walls would not provide barriers and each could meet with each, country with country, race with race in perfect equality and comradeship in the Parliament of Man and the Federation of the World.

As a scholar points out—"Bengal, as we know, did not reject life and its values as illusion. Rather she tried along the above ways—each in its day a great unifying force—to discover their secret significance accepting life as a field of spiritual unfolding with the result that an abundance of creative energy was released". This was the mainspring of her cultural fellowship, the source of her joy and inspiration in which followers of any cult could join without jeopardising his political and communal faith or loyalty to a party or a state. Into that vision of harmony let us march together—in perfect friendship and equality with the symbols of Jai Bangla and Jai Hind.

M. R. TARAFDAR

Cultural conflict in Bangladesh

BANGLADESH has come into being as a result of a recent national movement. This is likely to be followed by a cultural awakening and may eventually bring about profound changes as much in political, social and legal institutions of the country as in its literature, arts and crafts. It is, therefore, worthwhile to examine the conflicting attitudes and angularities which dominate our intellectual climate. There is hardly any reason to believe that the problems, which we are about to touch upon, have been created as the result of the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent political unit. The present generation of people has inherited them from the logic of their history and politics.

Almost every educated Muslim of this region has developed a particular attitude to the history and antiquity of Bengal. The Shunga, Gupta, Pala and Sena periods are but a distant echo hardly having any impact upon his mind (and for him); history of civilization begins with him as soon as the cavalry of Bakhtiyar Khilji entered into Bihar and North Bengal. By fragmenting the past and accepting or rejecting it partly, one can hardly have a sound heritage on which cultural traditions can be built up. A civilization or a culture comes into being not with unexpected suddenness, nor through the conscious efforts of a single, group of people, big or small working at a given time, but it goes through a long and complex historical process extending over a considerably long period of time whose continuity is generally unbroken. The Bengali Muslims are hardly able to recognize the true nature of this process as against taking a sectional view of the past. It is precisely because of this that they are incapable of absorbing in their national

consciousness the various elements of civilization like the archaeological relics and literary specimens dating from ancient times. Unless we can claim this entire past as our own, it will be difficult for us to base our culture on a permanent footing and the heritage on a firm mooring.

It is somewhat anomalous to believe that a nation can quite tactily accept the dichotomy between its immediate past and remote past. Yet it is actually felt that we are psychologically tormented whenever we want to absorb the relics of the past in our consciousness of traditions. We can quite dispassionately look at the ruins of Mahenjo daro and Harappa. Is it at all possible for us to adopt a similar dispassionate attitude when we visit the Brahmanical and Buddhist sculptures preserved in the Dacca Museum and Varendra Research Museum? The ruins of Athens and Persepolis can create in our minds, in addition to a scientific curiosity about the past, a feeling of melancholy arising out of the sense of transitoriness of human achievements. We feel that we have no historical relationship with these ruins. Thus we retain our mental detachment. But when we stand on the ruins of Paharpur, Mahasthan and Mainamati, we experience altogether a different feeling—a feeling of intimacy created by our immediate relationship with these ruins and also by our spiritual link with the past represented by the archaeological relics. In this case the past belongs to us and we belong to the past. The situation contains definitely an element of mental involvement from our side. Does our mind react in a similar way when we pay a visit to the archaeological ruins located in a foreign country?

It may be argued that Brahmanism or Buddhism is not our religion so that it is hardly possible for us to have an intimate spiritual relationship with their artistic expression or products. But every religion is a combination of ideas, and with ideas we have no quarrel. So we have hardly any difficulty in having an affinity with Brahmanical or Buddhist art. Moreover, Brahmanism or Buddhism, particularly the aspect of these religions, which finds expression through architecture, sculpture, music, painting and creative literature, is but an admixture of philosophy and art. Do we have adequate reasons to suffer from mental conflict, when we come across any philosophy or art? The people of this region, though ethnically representing various elements, have yet a homogeneous entity created by the historical and environmental factors which bind them and compel them to live together.

In matter of food habits, they are essentially Austriac; and an analysis of their mental habits will reveal that they are compounded of a wide variety of ideas inherited from the numerous ethnic groups which lived here at the different periods of history. If this theory finds general acceptance, and I think it does, why should we show hesitation to receive Brahmanical and Buddhist artistic legacies as our own? It is not, however, asserted that the elements of civilization produced in the Muslim

and British periods should be rejected. What I like to indicate is that beginning from the remotest past to the recent present, whatever has assumed the nature and shape of traditions forms an integral part of our culture and without this our civilization cannot be perfect. We can easily free ourselves from the psychological conflict that arises out of our incapacity to accept the past. And the educated Bengali Muslim can do this only when he feels that his entire being is deeply rooted in the soil.

Indian Muslims in general and Bengali Muslims in particular have an extra-territorial attitude which very often renders their creative activities superficial and their entire being parasitical. Though living in this subcontinent, they cut across its geographical boundaries to receive spiritual or intellectual inspiration from certain centres to which their mental affiliation is only superficial. The particular type of attitude mentioned here has been imposed upon them partly by history and partly by religion of Islam. No pre-Mughal Muslim ruler was regarded as a lawful monarch, unless he had the sanction of the Khalifah of Baghdad behind his authority either in the form of a formal diploma of investiture or through tacit support from the latter enhancing the dignity of the ruler in the public eye. When the Mughal rule was established in Bengal, the Muslims of this region, though somewhat unconcerned about the kind of Khilafat that existed far beyond the Indian frontiers, had to show intellectual allegiance to the metropolitan cities of Delhi and Agra replacing Baghdad and Cairo. Thus the countries which eventually claimed the attention of the Indian Muslims, are Arabia, the home of Islam, Persia, the source of Indo-Muslim culture and Turkey, the seat of Khilafat down to the beginning of the present century. Certain religio-political developments of recent times considerably influenced the minds of the Bengali Muslims. These are the Wahabi movement and the Khilafat movement whose leaders declared India to be a *daru-ul-harb* or a region under non-Muslim political domination where Islam could not be practised and from where Muslims were asked to migrate to find out a home for Islam. The tendency which the Wahabi movement had encouraged seems to have found expression in the form and contents of the Bengali *puthis* which grew under the direct impact of Urdu literature and which consequently breathed a spirit of Perso-Arabian culture symbolizing what may be termed as a cultural flight to the land of Islam. No wonder then that this *puthi* literature has been regarded as a great asset to Muslim culture by the Islamists of East Pakistan.

The rise of Syed Ahmad Khan as a socio-political leader in Northern India and the growth of a middle class intelligentsia under his pioneering guidance are facts of history which have hardly an impact upon the Muslims of Bengal where a Bengali-speaking Muslim

middle class was almost totally absent down to the early part of the present century. Had the renaissance and the Hindu nationalism of the nineteenth century Bengali widened enough to accommodate the Muslims, the extra-territorial outlook of a significant section of population might have changed and under the impact of common political and cultural participation it could have been properly rooted in the soil. It is, therefore, quite natural that the late nineteenth century awakening which characterized a group of Muslims in Calcutta and which found its expression in Bengali literature and journalism was primarily in the form of religious nationalism exhibiting its extra-territorial nature.

The leaders of the Pakistan movement had put much emphasis on the separate and independent cultural identity of the Muslims, and this emphasis became a characteristic feature of the administration even after the establishment of Pakistan which now used this attitude against the neighbouring state. The ruling class utilized the extra-territorial feelings of the Bengali Muslims for retaining its hold on East Bengal. To these people with their feudal background, a stable Pakistan meant the restoration of power and privileges they used to enjoy during the Mughal rule to themselves. The educated middle class, which had a considerable growth after 1947, came to develop a sense of alienation from the local traditions and its secular and eclectic attitude towards the problems of life. This was viewed with concern not only by the ruling class, but also by its puritanical Bengali supporters. The tendencies stated just now adequately affected the culture of this region. There arose a controversy with regard to language, literature and culture in general. A group of intellectuals adhered to religious nationalism and religious culture opposed by the rationalist section who wanted to ground culture deeply on regional traditions supplemented and strengthened by the scientific and humanistic culture of the West. The Islamist posed as the guardian of Islamic traditions which were supposed to have contained the ready-made solutions of all the problems that a constantly changing society might confront. He wanted to Islamize everything by introducing Persian script and Urdu-Persian words in Bengali language, changing the trend of literature and banning whatever was considered un-Islamic. Tagore's songs and poems were regarded as symbols of *Hinduani* and whatever was found to bear resemblance to Hindu culture was totally discarded. If the mind of the Islamist could be laid open, it would be perceived that he was suffering from a sense of insecurity arising out of fear for Indian or Bengali Hindu domination over the economy of East Bengal. Such a psychology was purposely encouraged by the ruling class, because the communal approach to culture indicated just now, was best suited to their feudal interests.

Literature produced in the last two decades, particularly its poetical branch, clearly betrays a considerable amount of tension. But here the Islamist is a man of sincere convictions. Since he is extremely anxious to revive the Indo-Persian tradition in poetry, he freely writes on Islam and its historical personalities and myths and legends having an Islamic setting. His attitude to Islam is thoroughly romantic. There is another group of poets who have accepted the Bengali tradition that has grown during the last one hundred years. Tagore and a number of modern Hindu poets and also western literature seem to have inspired them.

Now I may return to the position from where I started. The Muslim is a split personality. History shows that he has always wavered between regional nationalism and extra-territorialism without accepting either. Political nationalism may counter this extra-territorial outlook. But nationalism has its own defects. Unless it can constantly go through a process of synthesis by receiving fresh ideas from other nationalities, it may sink into sectionalism and such a narrow and stagnant national culture is likely to prove dangerous to the people. The Bengali Muslim has discovered his political identity, but he is yet to discover his cultural identity, and to know himself well.

নোলিমা ইব্রাহিম

বাংলাদেশ ও সাংস্কৃতিক সংকট

কোনও একটি জাতি বা মানবগোষ্ঠীর দৈনন্দিন নিত্যপ্রয়োজনীয় কাজকর্ম থেকে শুরু করে তার চিন্তাধারার বহিঃপ্রকাশের সম্মিলিত রূপায়ণই ঐ জাতি বা গোষ্ঠীর সংস্কৃতি নামে অভিহিত হয়ে থাকে, সুতরাং কোনও জাতির সংস্কৃতি নির্ণয়ের ক্ষেত্রে ভৌগোলিক সীমারেখা ও কালের অবস্থানের উল্লেখযোগ্য অবদান রয়েছে।

সাংস্কৃতিক বিচার বিশ্লেষণ করতে গেলে এর দুটি রূপ বা ভিন্ন চেতনা আমরা লক্ষ করি। প্রথমটি আত্মপ্রকাশ করে জাতির দৈনন্দিন জীবনধারাকে অবলম্বন করে, এ ক্ষেত্রে নিত্যব্যবহার্য তৈজসপত্র, আসবাব, শয়ন, ভোজন ইত্যাদি থেকে শুরু করে তার সামাজিক উৎসব অনুষ্ঠান, জন্মলগ্নে অনুষ্ঠিত লোকাচার থেকে শুরু করে অন্নপ্রাশন, আকিকা, বিয়ে, অস্ত্যেষ্টিক্রিয়া এমন কি তার পরবর্তী অনুষ্ঠান পর্যন্ত সংস্কৃতির বহিরঙ্গের পর্যায়ে পড়ে। এখানে অবশ্য ধর্মের প্রশ্ন ওঠে, কিন্তু আশ্চর্যভাবে লক্ষ করা যায় ধর্ম ভিন্ন হলেও আচরণীয় অনুষ্ঠানে অপূর্ব মিল, এবং এই সাদৃশ্যই ঐ জাতির লৌকিক সাংস্কৃতিক রূপ। যেমন বাংলা দেশের হিন্দু অথবা মুসলমান যে ধর্মভক্তই তাঁরা হোননা কেন তাঁদের বিয়ের আচার অনুষ্ঠানে যে মিল আছে ভারতের মুসলমান বা উত্তর ভারতের হিন্দু বিবাহ অনুষ্ঠানে সে আচরণের মিলে অভাব রয়েছে। সুতরাং মূল কাঠামো বা মন্ত্রোচ্চারণে ধর্মীয় ব্যবধান থাকলেও সামাজিক অনুষ্ঠানে জাতীয় সংস্কৃতি বড় হয়ে দেখা দেয়।

এই জন্যই জাতীয় সংস্কৃতির ঐতিহ্য খুঁজতে গিয়ে আমরা যখন পূর্বসূরীদের ফেলে যাওয়া নিদর্শন স্বরূপ হাঁড়ি কুঁড়ি মাটির কলসী বা পাথরের হাতিয়ারকে সযত্নে রক্ষা করি তখন ঐ সমস্ত সাধারণ ব্যবহার্য দ্রব্য আমাদের কাছে অনেক মূল্যবান হয়ে ওঠে। প্রাচীন মন্দির বা বিহারে অঙ্গসজ্জায় নরনারী দেখলে তাদের বেশভূষা, অঙ্গভঙ্গী সব কিছু আমরা পুণ্যানুপুণ্য রূপে লক্ষ করি এবং আমাদের অতীত সংস্কৃতিকে খুঁজে পেতে চাই। সুতরাং বাহ্যিক জীবনচেতনার সংস্কৃতি জাতীয় জীবনের সঙ্গে ওতপ্রোত ভাবে জড়িত।

সংস্কৃতির দ্বিতীয় ধারায় আমরা লক্ষ করি এই সমাজের ব্যক্তিচেতনার সমষ্টিগত রূপকে।

একই সময়ে বিশেষ মানবগোষ্ঠীর চিন্তাজগতে জীবনের কি রহস্য কি ভাবে উদ্ভাসিত হয়েছে, এই চিন্তাধারা তার আত্মিক সংস্কৃতি বোধের স্বরূপ প্রকাশিত করে।

সুতরাং সাংস্কৃতিক চেতনা বা জীবনবোধ মানব সমাজের বাস্তব জীবন ও অন্তর্চেতনার সমন্বিত রূপ।

বাংলাদেশের সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক জীবন পর্যালোচনার আমরা যেখানে এসে পৌঁছেছি তাতে এ জীবনচেতনায় বেশ কয়েকটি পর্যায় আমরা লক্ষ্য করি। কারণ ধারাবাহিক জীবনচেতনা ও ঐতিহ্য-সংযুক্ত মনে অনেক সময় বাইরের অনেক ধাক্কা এসে তার অতীত ধারাকে কিছুটা বিপর্যস্ত অথবা কখনও কখনও পরিমার্জিত কিংবা পরিবর্তিত করে। এমনি করেই সাংস্কৃতিক চেতনা নতুন সম্পদ আহরণে সমৃদ্ধ হয়। যেমন মোগলদের ব্যবহারিক জীবনের সংস্পর্শে এসে আজ বাঙ্গালী উৎসবে পোলাও, কোর্মা, কালিয়া খায়, ইংরাজের সঙ্গে দীর্ঘকালের ঘনিষ্ঠতার ফলে কোট প্যান্ট টাই পরে। আজ একে আর বাঙ্গালী জীবনের সংস্কৃতি থেকে পৃথক করা সম্ভব নয়। অবশ্য কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে বহিঃপ্রভাব অতিমাত্রায় শক্তিশালী হয়ে এক নব সাংস্কৃতিক ধারায় অপর ধারা প্রায় নির্মল্জিত হয়। যেমন আমরা হয়েছি পাশ্চাত্য জীবনাচরণের মাঝে। তেমনি হঠাৎ আত্মবিস্মৃত জাতি জেগে ওঠে। নিজের ঐতিহ্য ও সংস্কৃতির সন্ধানে উন্মাদ হয়ে ওঠে। হারিয়ে যাওয়ার সম্পদকে তার খুঁজে বের করতেই হবে। যে-পথ খুঁজতে বেরিয়ে ছিলেন রাজা রামমোহন রায়, ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর, স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ। অবশ্য এই অস্বাভাবিক পরিস্থিতি সাধারণত ঘটে থাকে রাজনৈতিক চাপের মুখে অর্থাৎ শক্তিশালী বহিঃশক্তির আক্রমণ বা অধিকারের ফলে।

বাংলাদেশ বহুবার বহু বহিঃশক্তি কর্তৃক আক্রান্ত ও অধিকৃত হয়েছে, ফলে অধিকর্তা রাজার ধর্ম থেকে শুরু করে তাদের আচার ব্যবহার, পোশাক পরিচ্ছদ, সামাজিক আচার অনুষ্ঠান সবই বিজিত জাতির উপর প্রভাব বিস্তার করেছে, এমনি ভাবে বাংলার বৌদ্ধধর্ম, ব্রাহ্মণ্য ধর্ম, বৈষ্ণব ধর্ম, ইসলাম ধর্ম, খ্রীষ্ট ধর্ম, সব ধর্মই রাজশক্তির অধিকারেই তাদের ছাপ রেখে গেছে। এই যে হিন্দু মুসলমান ও বৌদ্ধধর্মালম্বী বাংলার অধিবাসী এঁদের উৎপত্তি তো ওই একই সূত্র থেকে। কিন্তু মূলত তারা বাঙ্গালী, বাংলাদেশের অধিবাসী এ বোধ জাগে নিজস্ব সাংস্কৃতিক চেতনায়।

এমনি ভাবেই পাঠান, মোগল, ইংরাজ ও আরও বহু জাতি তাদের সভ্যতা, সংস্কৃতি, সাহিত্য, সঙ্গীত ও জীবনধারণের নানা ছাপ রেখে গেছে বাঙ্গালী জীবনের আচার আচরণে, ধর্মীয় জীবনচেতনায়, বাংলার কৃষ্টি ও সংস্কৃতিতে।

জাতির জীবনে এমনি বহিঃশক্তির প্রভাবে জাতি কখনও কখনও আত্মবিস্মৃত হয়। আবার প্রয়োজনে নিজের মূল্যায়নে, নিজের স্বাভাবিকতা ও অস্তিত্ব বজায় রাখবার জন্যে নিজস্ব সংস্কৃতি সম্পর্কে সচেতন হয়।

অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রেই জাতি তার সংস্কৃতি সম্পর্কে বিশেষভাবে সচেতন থাকে না কারণ সংস্কৃতি জীবনধারণের অঙ্গ, মানব সমাজের অস্তিত্বের সঙ্গে ওতপ্রোতভাবে জড়িত। কিন্তু রাষ্ট্রীয় জীবনচেতনায় বিশেষত জাতীয়তাবোধ উন্মেষের প্রয়োজনে মানুষ সংস্কৃতি-সচেতন হয়ে ওঠে, যেমন হয়েছিল ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর মাঝামাঝি কালে সমগ্র ভারতবর্ষ।

ইংরেজ শাসনকে মেনে নিয়ে আমরা ইংরাজী সাহিত্যের রসাস্বাদনে মুগ্ধ হলাম। বিজ্ঞান ও দর্শনের সঙ্গে পরিচিত হয়ে জ্ঞানলাভ করলাম। সেই লব্ধ জ্ঞানে ইংরেজকে এক আশ্চর্য বিস্ময়ের দৃষ্টিতে দেখলাম। ইউরোপ মনে হল স্বর্গপুরী, ওদেশের শ্বেতকায়দের মনে হল আদর্শ মানব।

তারপর নবলব্ধ জ্ঞানকে বিশ্লেষণ করে আত্ম-আবিষ্কার করলাম। নতুন দৃষ্টিতে দেখলাম প্রভু ইংরেজকে। দেখতে পেলাম ওরা রাজা আমরা প্রজা, ওরা প্রভু আমরা দাস, ওরা শোষক আমরা শোষিত। যেদিকে তাকাই ইংরাজী ভাষা, সাহিত্যেও সভ্যতার রাংতা-মোড়া ভারতের রূপ। চিন্তাশীল, দেশপ্রেমিক বিচলিত হলেন। পেয়েছি অনেক, কিন্তু হঠাৎ আবিষ্কার করলাম ঘর শূন্য, সাংস্কৃতিক চেতনার দেউলে হয়ে বসে আছি আমরা।

ইংরেজের শোষণ ও নির্যাতনে ভারতে এক নব জাতীয়তাবাদের উন্মেষ হল। ভাবতে আশ্চর্য লাগে, ভারতের স্বাধীনতা-অর্জনের পথ খুলে দিয়েছিল অপর জাতির অত্যাচার, শোষণ ও শাসন। সারা ভারতে এই চেতনায় স্পর্শ প্রথম এনে দিল বাংলাদেশ। আর এই জাতীয়তাবোধের সৃষ্টির জন্যে দুহাত বাড়িয়ে খুঁজে নিতে হল হারিয়ে যাওয়া সংস্কৃতিকে।

এ সময়ে শিক্ষিত সমাজ অশনে বসনে আচারে ব্যবহারে প্রায় ইংরেজ হয়ে গেছে। তবুও সুবু হল ঘরে ফেরার পালা, ঈশ্বর গুপ্ত কবিতা লিখলেন :

দেশের কুকুর ধরি,

বিদেশের ঠাকুর ফেলিয়া...

মধুসূদন বাংলা সাহিত্যকে অন্দর থেকে দরবারে আনলেন, বিদ্যাসাগর সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যকে গণসমাজে তুলে ধরলেন। তালতলার চটি ইংরেজের সামনে টেবিলে উঠল। বঙ্কিম এলেন 'বন্দেমাতরম' সঙ্গীত নিয়ে। ইংরেজ ইতিহাসে কল্পিত চরিত্র সিরাজউদ্দৌলা হলেন উপন্যাস-নাটকে জাতীয় বীর, মীরকাশিম স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনের অগ্রদূত।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ এলেন তাঁর সৃষ্টিসম্ভার নিয়ে, বাঙ্গালী কবি নোবেল প্রাইজ পেলেন। নজরুল বাজালেন অগ্নিবীণা, বাঙ্গালী বুক ফুলিয়ে ভাবল আমরা কম কিসে? আমাদের গৌরবোজ্জ্বল সাহিত্য আছে, আছে শোর্ধ-বীর্যের ইতিহাস, সুবু হল স্বাধিকার অর্জনের সাধনা। বাংলা এগিয়ে এল সবাইকে পেছনে ফেলে।

ইংরেজ ইতিহাসে এ আন্দোলন সন্ত্রাসবাদ নামে পরিচিত। চট্টলার বুক কঁপে উঠল। সূর্য সেন হলেন স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনে অগ্রপথিক বাঙ্গালী।

অবশ্য এ সময়ে বাংলা বৃহৎ ভারতের অংশ। তবুও তার চিন্তাধারায় এক স্বাতন্ত্র্যবোধ বরাবর লক্ষ করা গেছে। সমগ্র ভারত থেকে বহুদূরে অবস্থিত সুন্দরবনের বাঘ আর সাপের দেশ বাংলা অনেক কাল পর্যন্ত আর্থ সংস্কৃতির বাইরে ছিল। উত্তর ভারতের আর্থ জ্বনপদের সঙ্গে তার পরিচয় অনেক পরে, তারা বাংলাকে ঘৃণা করতেন। পুরাণে নাকি আমরা পক্ষীজাতি বলে উল্লিখিত। এখানে এলে নাকি প্রায়শ্চিত্ত করতে হত। হতে পারে পথকন্ডের, দায় এড়ানোর জন্য শাস্তিবিধান এদেশে আছে, তাই বাংলা বিচ্ছিন্ন থাকবার জন্যে তার সাংস্কৃতিক জীবনেও একটা স্বাতন্ত্র্য গড়ে উঠেছিল।

সর্বভারতীয় ক্ষেত্রে বাঙ্গালীর ভোজ্য দ্রব্য ও পাকপ্রণালী পৃথক, তার পিঠাপুলি

বিদ্যাবানের খই আর গানছা-বাঁধা দই স্বতন্ত্র, তার নবান্ন উৎসব প্রতি ঘরে । ১লা বৈশাখে তার নববর্ষ । বাঙ্গালীর পোশাক বিচিত্র, তার মস্তক অনাবৃত । বাঙ্গালী বধূ কলসী মাথায় নয়, কাঁখে । বাংলার জারিগান, সারিগান, ভাটিয়ালা, ভাওয়াইয়া, মনসার ভাসান তার পল্লীজীবনকে উৎসবমুখর করে তুলেছে । তার নকশা কাঁথার শিল্পনৈপুণ্য, তার আলপনার বৈচিত্র্য বাংলার বিশেষ সংস্কৃতির ধারক ও বাহক, এই স্বাতন্ত্র্যের জন্যেই বৃহৎ ভারতের অংশ হিসেবে অবস্থান করেও বাংলা এত দ্রুত স্বাধিকার আদায়ের জন্যে মাথা তুলে দাঁড়িয়ে ছিল । মুক্তি-পাগল নেতাজী এই বাংলা থেকেই সমগ্র ভারতকে সশস্ত্র বিপ্লবের আহ্বান জানিয়েছিলেন ।

ইতিহাসের এ অধ্যায়ে যখন আমরা পৌঁছেছি তখন বাংলার শান্তিপূর্ণ সাংস্কৃতিক ও সামাজিক জীবনে এক অশুভ শক্তির খেলা শুরু হয়ে গেছে । এ পর্যন্ত সাংস্কৃতিক চেতনার বাঙ্গালী ছিল এক । ধর্ম এখানে বিরোধ সৃষ্টি করতে পারেনি । শহরাঞ্চল থেকে ইংরাজী শিক্ষা ও সভ্যতায় অভ্যস্ত হিন্দু-মুসলমানই প্রথম ইংরাজ শাসনের হাতের শিকার হলেন । চতুর ইংরাজের এ খেলা যে সেদিন দেশবাসী একেবারে বুঝতে পারেনি, তা নয় । তবুও এ দুর্ভাগ্যকে এড়ানোর জন্য যে বলিষ্ঠ মানসিকতার প্রয়োজন ছিল, খুব কমসংখ্যক হিন্দু মুসলমান নেতাই তার অধিকারী ছিলেন । চতুর শাসক ইংরাজ এবারে শিক্ষিত সমাজকে সাম্প্রদায়িকতার খেলায় মাতিয়ে দিল, হঠাৎ ধর্মীয় চেতনার যেন দেশ সজাগ হল । আমরা আগে হিন্দু মুসলমান, বৌদ্ধ, ব্রাহ্মণ, জৈন, পারসিক, পরে ভারতীয় বা বাঙ্গালী বা অন্য প্রদেশের অধিবাসী । হিন্দু জমিদার, মুসলমান প্রজা, অতএব হিন্দু শোষক মুসলমান শোষিত । হিন্দু ইংরেজী শিক্ষাকে গ্রহণ করে উচ্চ পদে অধিষ্ঠিত, মুসলমান সে শিক্ষাকে বর্জন করে দেশে রাষ্ট্রীয় ও সরকারী অধিকারে অবহেলিত । সুতরাং আমি শাসক ইংরাজ তোমাদের সমান অধিকার দান করব । আইন সভায় সাম্প্রদায়িক ভিত্তিতে আসন নির্দিষ্ট হবে, চাকরিতে আসন সংরক্ষিত হবে । এমন কি বিদ্যালয়ে পর্যন্ত অহিন্দু ছাত্রছাত্রীর জন্য আসন সংরক্ষিত থাকবে । ধীরে ধীরে অধিকার সচেতন হয়ে উঠল ধর্মাত্মক দেশবাসী । না আর এক সঙ্গে থাকা নয়, তোমরা তোমরা, আমরা আমরা । সুতরাং বাসভূমিও পৃথক্ চাই । অধিকারের দাবিতে হিন্দু ও মুসলমানকে ধর্মীয় ভিত্তিতে সোচ্চার হয়ে উঠতে হল । আর জাতীয় সংস্কৃতিও এবারে ধর্মীয় ভিত্তিতে ভাগ হয়ে গেল ।

১৯৪৭ সালে জন্ম নিল ভারত-দ্বিখণ্ডিত—হিন্দুস্থান ও পাকিস্তান । মহা উৎসাহে যে যার কৃত্রিম স্বদেশে ছুটে গেল । পড়ে রইল পৈত্রিক ভিটেমাটি, লৌকিক গৃহদেবতা, পূজামণ্ডপ আর দোলমণ্ড । পড়ে রইল পিতৃ-পিতামহের কবর আর মসজিদ মস্তব । নেতারা বড় বড় পদ পেলেন, ব্যবসায়ীরা ছুটে এলেন নিজের তৈরী স্বদেশে, উপার্জন করলেন কোটি কোটি টাকা, কিন্তু আপামর জনসাধারণ ? বছর না ঘুরতেই তারা বুঝল যে ধনবান্ধব শিকার হয়েছে তারা । পুতুল নাচের খেলার পুতুল তারা, সুতো ধাঁদের হাতে, তারা সেদিন তাদের নাগালের বাইরে ।

দেশের জমি ভাগ হল । সম্পদ ভাগ হল । এবারে ভাগ করতে হবে ইতিহাস, ঐতিহ্য আর সংস্কৃতিকে । কিন্তু এখানে হিসাবে একটা গরমিল দেখা দিল । বাংলাদেশ নামে

ভূগোলে আর কোনও ভূখণ্ড খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় না, সুতরাং বাংলাদেশের ইতিহাস, সাহিত্য, সংস্কৃতিকে উত্তরাধিকারসূত্রে গ্রহণ করল পশ্চিমবঙ্গ, কিন্তু নতুন ইসলামিক রাষ্ট্র পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের ভাণ্ডার গেল শূন্য হয়ে। তাদের ইতিহাস কি? না, পূর্ব পাকিস্তানীর কোনও অতীত ইতিহাস নেই, নেই কোনও ঐতিহ্য সাহিত্য বা সাংস্কৃতিক ধারা। তোমরা তোমরা, নবগঠিত রাষ্ট্র। চিন্তা নেই, পশ্চিম পাকিস্তান তোমাদের শূন্য ভাণ্ডার পূর্ণ করে দেবে শুধু একটি শর্তে। তোমাদের মুসলমান হতে হবে, তোমাদের ঐতিহ্য, ইতিহাস ও সংস্কৃতির আদি উৎস আরবভূমি, এখানে তোমরা পরবাসী বিজয়ী বীর। এখানকার প্রচলিত আচার আচরণ সবই হিন্দুয়ানী, সুতরাং তোমাদের কাছে শুধু পরিত্যাজ্যই নয়, ঘৃণ্যও। অতএব হে আদমসন্তানবৃন্দ, সতর্ক হও, নিজেদের ধর্মচ্যুত করো না, আভিজাত্যবোধ থেকে বঞ্চিত হয়ে কাফেরের জীবনকে গ্রহণ করো না। হাবিয়া দোজখের ভয় থাকলে সুরণ রেখ তোমরা মুসলমান। প্রতিটি মুসলমান তোমাদের ভাই। তোমরা ইসলামিক রাষ্ট্রের অধিবাসী। হাজার হাজার মাইল দূরে থাকলেও সিন্ধী, বালুচ, পাঠান, পাজাবী তোমার ভাই, আত্মীয় আত্মীয়। সুতরাং ওদের সঙ্গে এক হতে হবে। প্রতিবেশী পশ্চিমবঙ্গের অধিবাসীরা হিন্দু, অতএব আমাদের দূশমন, কঠোর ধর্মের দুর্গে বাস করব আমরা। কারণ বাইরের পৃথিবীর অমুসলমানীয় কোনও পাপ স্পর্শ যেন আমাদের না লাগে। কিন্তু পূর্বপাকিস্তানীদের মনে প্রথমে জাগল, পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানের অধিবাসীরা তো, ভারত কেন, সর্ব বিশ্বের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ স্থাপন করেছে। উত্তর এল, ওদের জন্য চিন্তা নেই, ওরা খাঁটি মুসলমান, তোমরা দো-আশলা, তোমাদের শক্তির প্রয়োজন।

জীবনের সর্বক্ষেত্রে শক্তি আন্দোলন শুরু হল। পীর হলেন পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানী শাসকগোষ্ঠী ও পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের মুসলিম লীগপন্থী রাজনীতিবিদেতা।

বহিরঙ্গ সাংস্কৃতিক সংস্কার শুরু হল। পিতল কীসার তৈজসপত্র ব্যবহার হল নিন্দনীয়, ভোজ্য বস্ত্র গ্রহণেও রীতির পরিবর্তন ঘটল। পুরুষের পোশাকের পরিবর্তন হল। শেরওয়ানী পাজামার সঙ্গে মাথায় টুপি এল আর মেয়েরা যথাসম্ভব শালওয়ার, কামিজ, দোপাটায় নিজেদের মুসলমান করতে চেষ্টা করল। কপালে টিপ হিন্দুয়ানীর লক্ষণ বলে বর্জিত হল। বিয়ের আনুষঙ্গিক আচার-আচরণও ধীরে ধীরে পরিত্যাজ্য হতে লাগল হিন্দুয়ানীর দোহাই দিয়ে। সুতরাং লৌকিক জীবনে আচার আচরণে কঠোর বিধিনিষেধ উচ্চারিত হল।

দেশবাসীকে ইতিহাস ও ঐতিহ্য-সচেতন করবার জন্য ইসলামী ইতিহাসের পাঠ শুধু দেওয়া হল না, তৃতীয় শ্রেণী থেকে দশম শ্রেণী পর্যন্ত সমাজপাঠ নামক গ্রন্থ হল অবশ্য পাঠ্য। এখানে যতো রকম সম্ভব আজব ইতিহাস, ভূগোল, রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান মহাপুরুষ-জীবনী ইত্যাদি পড়ানো হতে লাগল। দীর্ঘনিয়ত হল অবশ্যপাঠ্য। তবুও পূর্ব পাকিস্তানীদের খাঁটি মুসলমান করানো গেল না। শেষ পর্যন্ত লিখিত হল নয়া ইতিহাস 'দেশ ও কৃষ্টি'। ছাত্র সমাজ আন্দোলন করল, বিকোভ দেখাল, ক্লাস বর্জন করল, তবুও ইসলামী কারখানায় প্রস্তুত নতুন কৃষ্টিতে মেনে নিল না।

এদিকে ইসলামী ভ্রাতৃত্ব বন্ধন দৃঢ় করবার জন্য সমগ্র পাকিস্তানে একটি রাষ্ট্রীয় ভাষা

প্রবর্তনের প্রয়োজন অনুভূত হল। কিন্তু দেশবিভাগের বছর ঘুরতে না ঘুরতে একটি অতি সাধারণ দাবিকে অবলম্বন করে ভ্রাতৃত্বের গ্রন্থিতে শৈথিল্য দেখা গেল। ১৯৪৮ সালের ২৩শে ফেব্রুয়ারি পাকিস্তান গণ-পরিষদের সদস্য সুগায়ী ধীরেন্দ্রনাথ দত্ত উর্দু ও ইংরেজীর সঙ্গে বাংলাকেও গণপরিষদের ব্যবহার্য ভাষারূপে ব্যবহারের দাবি জানানলেন, কিন্তু পাকিস্তানের প্রধানমন্ত্রী লিয়াকত আলী খান, পূর্ববাংলার মুখ্যমন্ত্রী খাজা নাজিমুদ্দিন ও গণপরিষদের সহ-সভাপতি মৌলবী তমিজুদ্দিন খান তার বিরোধিতা করলেন। ঘুমন্ত বাঙ্গালী দুঃস্থলের ঘোরে একটা ধাক্কা খেল। প্রতিবাদে ঢাকায় ১১ই মার্চ ছাত্র ধর্মঘট পালিত হল। বহু ছাত্র আহত ও কারাবদ্ধ হলেন।

১৯শে মার্চ গভর্নর জেনারেল মহম্মদ আলী জিন্না ঢাকায় এলেন। ঘোড়দৌড়ের ময়দানে ও কার্জন হলে উর্দুকেই একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রভাষা বলে ঘোষণা করলেন, ছাত্র সমাজ ক্রুদ্ধ হল।

সমাজের অভিজাত শ্রেণী যখন উর্দুকে মাতৃভাষারূপে গ্রহণ করে নিজেদের খাঁটি পাকিস্তানী বানাতে ব্যস্ত তখন মধ্যবিত্ত সমাজের সন্তানেরা বিশেষ করে ছাত্রসমাজ নিজেদের অতীতকে খুঁজতে সুরু করল। না, তারা স্বীকার করে না যে তারা ভূঁইফোড়, তাদের অতীত ইতিহাস আছে, আছে সমৃদ্ধ সাহিত্য ও সংস্কৃতি।

পরিণাম ১৯৫২ সালের রাষ্ট্রভাষা আন্দোলন, সালাম বরকত শহীদ হল। তাদের রক্তে জন্ম নিল বাঙ্গালী রক্তবীজের বংশ। শেরওয়ান টুপি হল সরকারী পোশাক, জনসাধারণ পরল পারজামা পাঞ্জাবি। মেয়েরা শাড়ী পরে আলপনা আঁকা পথে ফুল হাতে নিয়ে শোভাযাত্রা করে চলল শহীদ মিনারে অর্ঘ্য দিতে।

চমকে উঠলেন ধর্মাক্ত শাসকবাহিনী, একি অনায়াস! একি পাপাচার! একি কাফেরী আচরণ! বাঙ্গালী ছাত্রছাত্রী উত্তর দিল, এ আমাদের জন্মগত অধিকারের দাবি। আমরা বাঙ্গালী, বাংলা আমাদের মাতৃভাষা, মুখের কথা, সঙ্গীত, আলপনা, আর পুষ্পার্ঘ্য আমাদের সংস্কৃতির চিহ্ন।

শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান পূর্বেই কারাবদ্ধ হয়েছিলেন। বাহান্নোর আন্দোলনে বন্দী হলেন মওলানা আবদুল হামিদ খান ভাসানী, জনাব আবুল হাশেম, অধ্যাপক অজিতকুমার গুহ, অধ্যাপক মুনীর চৌধুরী এবং অধ্যাপক মুজাফফর আহমদ চৌধুরী সহ অন্যান্য ছাত্র, ছাত্রী, শ্রমিক ও পথচারী।

ফলে ১৯৫৪ সালে মুসলিম লীগ সরকার পূর্ব পাকিস্তানে শোচনীয় পরাজয় বরণ করল। ১৯৫৬ সালে পাকিস্তান গণ পরিষদে বাংলা অন্যতম রাষ্ট্রভাষার মর্যাদা পেল।

এদিকে চলল সাহিত্য-সংস্কার। ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় বাংলা বিভাগের অধ্যক্ষ আবদুল হাই সাহের পাঠ্যতালিকায় বাল্মীকিচন্দ্র রাখবার জন্য নানাভাবে ধিক্কৃত হলেন। গভর্নর মোনাম খান উপাচার্য ওসমান গণিকে ডেকে বাল্মীকি পড়াবার কৈফিয়ত চাইলেন। মধুসূদনের কৃষ্ণকুমারী নাটক বাংলা একাডেমীতে অভিনীত হবার জন্য পরিচালক সৈয়দ আলী আহসানকে ঐ পদ থেকে সরে যেতে হল। সাহিত্য পুরস্কারের ছড়ানি পড়ে গেল। দাউদ আদমজী, হাবিব ব্যাঙ্ক, ন্যাশনাল ব্যাঙ্ক, স্বয়ং প্রেসিডেন্ট সকলে সর্বস্তরে পুরস্কার দিয়ে সাহিত্য কিনতে

বাস্তব হয়ে গেলেন, কিছু ভোলাগেল না বাঙ্গালীকে। সুবিধা হল ১লা বৈশাখে রবীন্দ্র-জন্মোৎসব পালন।

সরকার এবারে শক্ত হলেন, ইকবাল হলেন পাকিস্তানের জাতীয় কবি। আবার বাঙ্গালীরা চিৎকার করে উঠল—আমরা? আমাদের কি হল? ঠিক আছে, তোমাদের জাতীয় কবি নজরুল ইসলাম। নামটার জন্যে তাঁকে গ্রহণ করা হল, হোন না তিনি পশ্চিমবঙ্গের অধিবাসী, তবুও তো মুসলিম-সন্তান, কিছু এখানেও বিপদ। নজরুল শুধু মুসলমানের কথাই লেখেননি, লিখেছেন তেরিশ কোটি হিন্দু দেবদেবীর কথাও। শ্যামাসঙ্গীত আর কীর্তনে বাঙ্গালী হৃদয় ভরে দিয়েছেন, কিছু উপায় কি? ঠিক আছে, ওকে গ্রহণ কর, তবে পরিবর্তিত ও সংস্কৃত করে। নজরুলের হিন্দুয়ানী অংশ বাদ দাও, শব্দ বদলাও। ফলে :

স্বারোয়ান গায় গান

শোন ওই রামা হৈ

পরিবর্তিত হল : স্বারোয়ান গায় গান

কেহ নাই খোদা বই।

এ ছাড়া শ্রাশানকে গোরস্থান করে নজরুলকে কোনও মতে ঘষে মেজে জাতীয় কবিরূপে ইকবালের পাশে দাঁড় করানো গেল।

এদিকে বাঙ্গালীর অপরাধে ১৯৫৮ সালে সামরিক শাসন প্রবর্তিত হল। শাসনের নাগপাণ যতো দৃঢ় হল বিরোধের বহিঃ ততো ছড়িয়ে পড়ল সমাজের সর্বস্তরে।

এরপর পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের সরকারী গগনে উদ্ভিত হলেন গভর্নর মোনেম খান। বাংলাদেশে তিনি জন্মেছিলেন ভাগ্যের বিড়ম্বনায়! বাংলাভাষা, সাহিত্য ও সংস্কৃতির ওপর তাঁর ছিল এক প্রচণ্ড জাত ক্রোধ।

ইতিমধ্যে আরবী অক্ষরে ও রোমান অক্ষরে বাংলাভাষা প্রচলনের আন্দোলন সরকারী-ভাবে সুবিধা হয়েছে। বিরোধিতা করলেন জ্ঞানবুদ্ধ আচার্য ড. মুহম্মদ শহীদুল্লাহ। জনগণের সমর্থন ছিল তাঁর পেছনে, সরকার ব্যর্থ হলেন।

১৯৬৩-৬৪ সালে বাংলাভাষা সাহিত্য ও সংস্কৃতির প্রতি গভর্নর বাহাদুর কিঞ্চিৎ নেকনজর দিলেন। বাংলা একাডেমী ও ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বিশেষজ্ঞ সমন্বয়ে এক কমিটি গঠন করা হল ভাষা সংস্কারের জন্য, কিছু ড. এনামুল হক, অধ্যাপক আবদুল হাই ও মুনীর চৌধুরী এ সংস্কারের বিরোধিতা করলেন।

এই সঙ্গে দ্বিগুণ উৎসাহে পাকিস্তানী কৃষ্টি ও তমস্কর প্রচলনের জন্য জাতীয় পুনর্গঠন সংস্থা স্থাপিত হল। বিপথগামী বাঙ্গালীকে ইসলামী চেতনায় উদ্ভুদ্ধ করবার জন্য লক্ষ লক্ষ টাকা ব্যয় হল। এখানেই কিছু দেশদ্রোহী বাঙ্গালী সন্তানের জন্ম হল। ড. হাসান জামান ছিলেন যাদের পীর।

মোনেম খান ঘোষণা করলেন মেয়েদের প্রকাশ্য মণ্ডে নাচ, গান বন্ধ। বুলবুল ললিতকলা কেন্দ্রকে সতর্ক করে দেওয়া হল, পনের বছরের ওপর যে-সব মেয়েদের বয়স তাদের মণ্ড আরোহণের পূর্বে সরকারী দপ্তর থেকে অনুমতি নিতে হবে। শুক হল ঢাকার

সংস্কৃতি অঙ্গন, কিছু সৌভাগ্য ছিল নিকটবর্তী। বিদেশী মেহমানকে অভ্যর্থনা জানানোর জন্য সরকারী উদ্যোগে ঢাকার রাজপথে ছাত্রী নাচানো হল। মণ্ড নিষিদ্ধ করে মেয়েদের নৃত্য গীতের জন্য রাজপথ উন্মুক্ত করে দেওয়া হল। মোনোমের বস্ত্র আর্টনি ফন্কা গেরোর পরিণত হল।

জাতীয় পুনর্গঠন সংস্থা টাকা বৃষ্টি শুরু করল। টাকা উড়ে যেতে লাগল কিছু ফল শূন্যের খাতাতেই জমা হল। বার বার চেষ্টা করেও রোমান হরফে বাংলা লেখা আর হয়ে উঠল না।

সংস্কৃতির অপর অঙ্গন উন্মুক্ত হল পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের রাজধানী ঢাকা নগরীতে টেলিভিশন চালু হবার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে। নৃত্য, গীত, নাটক ইত্যাদি প্রচুর সমারোহে পরিবেশিত হতে লাগল। সরকারী হুকুম এল, মেয়েরা কপালে টিপ পরতে পারবে না ওটা ইসলাম বিরোধী, নাটকের সংলাপে মা, বাবা থাকবে না, ওখানে আক্কা, আম্মা বলতে হবে। এমন কি একটি বিশেষ ঘরোয়া ভঙ্গীতে শাড়ী পরাও নিষিদ্ধ হয়ে গেল। অবশ্য সরকারী নিষেধ যতো কঠিন হল গণহৃদয়ের দ্বার ততোই উন্মুক্ত হল। চেষ্টা করেও সাম্প্রদায়িক দাঙ্গা বাধিয়েও সরকার হেরে গেলেন এ সময়ে। ইতিমধ্যে রবীন্দ্র সঙ্গীত বর্জনের পালা গাইলেন বেতার ও তথ্য মন্ত্রী খাজা শাহাবুদ্দিন। এ বিধি-নিষেধের ব্যাখ্যা নিয়ে দুর্জনে নানা মন্তব্য আজও করে থাকে। যাক, আঠারো জন শিক্ষক ও বুদ্ধিজীবী এক বিবৃতি প্রচার করে বললেন, রবীন্দ্রনাথ পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের সাহিত্য ও সংস্কৃতির অবিচ্ছেদ্য অঙ্গ।

কি এতো বড় নাফরমানী কথা! উত্তর দিলেন চিল্লিশজন সরকারী পোষা গোলাম। বাংলাদেশের ছাত্রসমাজ অবশ্য আজও তাদের চিল্লিশ চোর নামেই অভিহিত করে থাকে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথকে বাতিল করবার জন্য নজবুল একাডেমী স্থাপিত হল। শ্রদ্ধা জানানোর নামে রাজনৈতিক কারণে পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের মাটিতে নজবুল যতো অপমানিত ও পর্য়ুদস্ত হয়েছেন কোনও বিদেশী কবি অন্য দেশের মাটিতে এমনভাবে অপমানিত হয়েছেন বলে আমার জানা নেই।

অধিকতর উৎসাহে ২৫শে বৈশাখের সঙ্গে ২২শে শ্রাবণ উদ্‌যাপিত হল। ১লা বৈশাখ পূর্ব পাকিস্তান উৎসবমুখর হয়ে উঠল, বিবাহমণ্ডপে আলপনা আঁকা হল। চিত্রিত পিঁড়ি কুলা আবার তাদের জায়গা নিতে শুরু করল। চিত্রিত কুলায় প্রদীপ জ্বলে আবার পাঁচজন এয়ো বর-কনেকে বরণ করতে শুরু করল বাঙ্গালী মুসলমান পরিবারে। বিয়েতে বাজনা বাজল, বাঁজ ফুটল।

অসহ্য! মোনোম খান উল্লাদ হয়ে ভারতের সঙ্গে ষড়যন্ত্র মামলা সাজালেন শেখ মুজিবরের বিরুদ্ধে। এ এক পরমাশ্চর্য ঘটনা, সহযোগী অপরাধীরূপে কারাবদ্ধ হলেন বহু কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারী ও সামরিক, বেসামরিক কর্মচারী ও রাজনৈতিক কর্মী।

এবারে বাংলা উচ্চারণ কিছুটা স্ফীত হল। কিছু ছাইচাপা আগুন একদিন জ্বলে উঠল জগন্নাথ কলেজ প্রাঙ্গণে শত সহস্র ছাত্রের কণ্ঠে, আগরতলা ষড়যন্ত্র মামলা বাতিল কর। মুহূর্তে প্রস্ফলিত হতাশনের মতো বাংলার প্রত্যন্ত অঞ্চল পর্যন্ত পৌঁছে গেল ছাত্র কণ্ঠস্বর, দশজন ছাত্রনেতা মিলে গঠিত হল সংগ্রাম কমিটি। সাড়ে সাত কোটি বাঙ্গালী

তাদের নেতৃত্ব মেনে নিল। ধ্বনি উঠল, জয় বাংলা, বাংলা বাঙ্গালীর, সূর্য সেনের বাংলা, তিতুমীরের বাংলা, তোমার আমার বাংলা। রবীন্দ্র সঙ্গীতের জোয়ার এল, ঘরে ঘরে পথে প্রান্তরে শোনা গেল :

‘আমার সোনার বাংলা আমি তোমায় ভালবাসি’।

শেখ মুজিব কারামুক্ত হলেন, ছাত্রনেতা তোফায়েল আহমেদ সমগ্র জাতির পক্ষ থেকে তাঁকে বঙ্গবন্ধু নামে অভিহিত করলেন। বাংলার মাটিতে নব সূর্যোদয় হল।

আইয়ুবশাহী ভেসে গেল মোনাম খানের তথৎ তাউস। মণ্ডে এলেন ইয়াহিয়া, মহানুভবতার জিগির তুলে নির্বাচন ঘোষণা করলেন। বাঙ্গালী খুশী হল।

এল বন্যা, প্রাবন, ঘণিঝড়। ইয়াহিয়া খান চীন ভ্রমণ করে রাজধানীতে ফিরে গেলেন, দশ লক্ষ বাঙ্গালী প্রাণ দিল প্রাকৃতিক বিপর্যয়ের মুখে, সরকার অবিচলিত। উপনিবেশের কোথায় প্রাণহানি হল তা নিয়ে মাথা ঘামাবার দরকার নেই হাজার মাইল দূরে অবস্থানকারী পরদেশী সরকারের। বাঙ্গালী বুঝল শুধু ভাষা, সাহিত্য ও সাংস্কৃতিক ক্ষেত্রে তারা দেউলে হয়নি, আর্থিক জীবনেও আজ তারা স্রুতসর্বস্ব। ইসলামাবাদে ইন্দুপুরী গড়ে উঠেছে আমাদের বৈদেশিক মুদ্রায়। তার বেলায় বাধে মবুভূমি উর্বরা হল আর বাংলার সুজলা সুফলা শস্যক্ষেত্র বন্যায় ভেসে গেল। এর প্রতিকার চাই, আর দেরি নয়। অনেক সময় নষ্ট হয়েছে, বুথাই চলে এসেছি পঁচিশটা বছর ধর্মাস্ক বন্ধুর পথ বেয়ে।

নির্বাচন হল। বঙ্গবন্ধু হলেন জাতির পিতা, ধূর্ত ইয়াহিয়া তাঁকে পাকিস্তানের ভাবী প্রধানমন্ত্রী বলে অভিনন্দন জানালেন।

এর পরের ইতিহাস আর পূর্ব পাকিস্তানের ইতিহাস নয়। ভারত-বাংলাদেশের মিলিত ইতিহাস, সেদিন দু’বঙ্গের ভৌগোলিক ও রাজনৈতিক সীমারেখা চূর্ণ করে দিয়ে এক কোটি শরণার্থী এসে আশ্রয় ভিক্ষা করেছিল আপনাদের দ্বারে। ভারতীয় ঐতিহ্য অনুসারে শরণার্থীকে আপনারা নারায়ণ জ্ঞানে অর্চনা করেছেন, বুক পেতে দিয়েছিলেন তাদের আশ্রয় দিতে। বরাভয়দায়িনী শ্রীমতী গান্ধী শুনিয়েছিলেন তাঁদের আশার বাণী। প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়েছিলেন নিরাপত্তার, শেষ পর্যন্ত মানবিকতার অপমানে জেগে উঠলেন দন্ডদলনী। মানবাত্মার অধিকার রক্ষার দাবিতে ছুটে গেলেন বিশ্বের এক প্রান্ত থেকে অপর প্রান্তে। বিশ্ববৈবেক জাগ্রত হল, শুধু ঘুমিয়ে রইল কতিপয় শক্তিশালী বিদেশী রাষ্ট্রীয় সরকার। কিন্তু জয় হল সত্যের, জয় হল জনগণের শুভ ইচ্ছার।

বাংলাদেশ সর্বপ্রথম স্বাধীনতার স্বীকৃতি পেল ভারত সরকার ও ভারতীয় জনগণের কাছে। প্রেম ও প্রীতির অচ্ছেদ্য বন্ধনে আপনারা আমাদের বেঁধে নিলেন।

জয়ী হল গণদেবতা, বিজয় লাভ করল মিত্রবাহিনী। মুক্তি বাহিনীর সাফল্যে জগৎ বিস্মিত হল। গোরবের মুকুট পরলেন ইন্দিরাজী, আনন্দিত হল সোভিয়েত রাশিয়ার সরকার ও জনগণ। বাংলার আকাশে হল নব অবুণোদয়। বিশ্বমতের কাছে নতি স্বীকার করতে হল ভুট্টো-ইয়াহিয়া চক্রকে। মুজিবকে মুক্ত করে আনলেন ভারতীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী ইন্দিরা গান্ধীর নেতৃত্বে ভারত-বাংলার সন্মিলিত জনশক্তি। দ্বিশ লক্ষ বাঙ্গালীর রক্তে রাঙা মাটিতে নব অভিষেক হল জাতির পিতা শেখ মুজিবর রহমানের। আজ নিজেকে চিনে নেবার পথ

আমাদের মুক্ত। মুক্ত কণ্ঠে বলছি আমরা বাঙ্গালী, বাংলা আমাদের দেশ, বাংলা সাহিত্য আমাদের সাহিত্য, বাংলার ঐতিহ্য ও সংস্কৃতি আমাদের বাঁচবার মূলধন, জীবনপথের পাথর।

নারকেল, তাল, সুপারি গাছে ঘেরা পল্লী আমাদের স্নেহনীড়। রামমোহন, বিদ্যাসাগর, রবীন্দ্র, নজরুল আমাদের সাহিত্যের উত্তরাধিকার। রবীন্দ্রসঙ্গীত আমাদের জাতীয় সঙ্গীত, নজরুলসঙ্গীত সামরিক বাহিনীর উৎসাহ ও প্রেরণা। শাপলা আমাদের জাতীয় পুষ্প। শীতলাতলায় বাঙ্গালী পূজা দেয় রোগমুক্তির আশায়, মনসাকে খাওয়ায় দুধকলা, সত্যপীর সেজেছেন সত্যনারায়ণ। জারিগান, সারিগান আর মনসার ভাসান আমাদের লোকসঙ্গীত। ভাটিয়ালী, ভাওয়াইয়া বাংলার লোক সংস্কৃতির অংশ, ২১শে ফেব্রুয়ারি আমাদের জাতীয় অনুষ্ঠান দিবস, ১লা বৈশাখ বাঙ্গালীর নববর্ষ। পঁচিশে বৈশাখ, এগারই জ্যৈষ্ঠ অথবা ২২শে শ্রাবণের অনুষ্ঠান পালনে আজ আর আমাদের বাধা নেই।

বিয়েতে আমরা সানাই বাজাই, অনুষ্ঠান অঙ্গনে দিই আলপনা। তবুও কিছু আমরা বাঙ্গালী। আমরা হিন্দু, আমরা মুসলমান, আমরা বৌদ্ধ, আমরা খ্রীষ্টান, কিছু ধর্মের বাধা নেই সংস্কৃতির উত্তরাধিকার গ্রহণে। আজ আমরা মানুষ, মানুষের ধর্ম আমাদের ধর্ম। বাংলাদেশ ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ রাষ্ট্র, সমাজতন্ত্র এর মূলমন্ত্র। সুতরাং আমাদের ভবিষ্যৎ জীবনে সাংস্কৃতিক সংকটের অশুভ স্পর্শ যেন আমাদের আর পথপ্রশ্ণ না করে।

ভারত ও ব্রহ্মদেশ আমাদের প্রতিবেশী, এবার 'দিব আর নিব' মহোৎসবে আমরা ধনী হব, সমৃদ্ধ হব, পূর্ণতা পাবে আমাদের সাংস্কৃতিক জীবনচেতনা।

জয় বাংলা, জয় হিন্দ।

NILIMA IBRAHIM

Bangladesh and the Cultural Crisis

THE ENTIRE experience of a nation or a human group from its daily round of duties to the totality of its self-expression constitutes the culture of that nation or group; hence the geographic limits and the bounds of time are important factors in determining the cultural disposition of a nation.

An analysis of a culture reveals two different levels of forms or consciousness. The first level manifests, itself in the daily course of life that the nation lives—in the utensils and furniture that it uses, in the way it sleeps and eats, in its social festivals and ceremonies, in the birth rites: the *annaprāshan* (the ceremony of the child tasting his first staple food), marriage, the funeral and the performances that follow, all these are external aspects of the culture. Religion has to be taken into consideration in this context, but there can be striking similarities in the rituals and ceremonies even when the religions are different, and that itself may be a feature of the folk culture of a particular nation. While Hindus and Muslims in Bangladesh have similar marriage ceremonials, it will be difficult to trace similarities between the marriage rituals of the Arab Muslims and the Hindus of North India. So a common national culture may be evident in social ceremonials, in spite of religious distinctions in the general structure or in the *mantras* chanted.

In our search for our cultural roots, we preserve the archaeological remains of our predecessors, and the pots and pans, clay jars, and stone weapons, things of daily use, become valued possessions. We find men and women dressed in the costumes of their times in friezes in an old temple or a *vihara*, and we study their dresses and their gestures, and

try to trace our cultural heritage, for culture is an essential element in these external manifestations of the spirit of life of a nation.

The second level of culture lies in the total expression of the individual consciousness that defines the character of the nation. The temper of the society is revealed in the thought of the nation, in the way it looks into the mysteries of life. Hence the cultural consciousness or understanding of life shared by a community is a collective manifestation of the actual being and consciousness of the community.

In a close study of the social and cultural life of Bangladesh, we can trace a number of phases in the evolution of its understanding of life. For tradition runs through the continuous evolution of a life consciousness; external forces often disturb, refine or change the older line of development; this is the process through which the cultural consciousness enriches itself. The impact of the Mughal way of life introduced the Bengalis to the *Polau*, the *Korma* and the *Kalia* that now belong to any Bengali menu in festivals. From our contact with the British we have derived our European style suits. We cannot but recognize these now as part of the culture of Bengali life. At times however an external influence can overwhelm the older course of the cultural life and submerge it under the new culture, for instance the way we had lost ourselves in the Western style of life. But the nation rediscovers itself after a time, and seeks its traditional roots and culture with a passion. They must seek out their heritage. This was the search undertaken by Raja Rammohun Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Swami Vivekananda. This unnatural cleavage is most often the consequence of a powerful political impact, in the face of a foreign aggression or occupation.

Bangladesh has been attacked and occupied by foreign forces many times. The religion, the customs and manners, the clothes, and the social ceremonials of the new ruling forces have naturally influenced the life of the defeated people; in this way Buddhism, Brahminism, Vaishnavism, Islam and Christianity have been carried into Bangladesh by foreign ruling powers, and these have left their traces upon our culture. The Bengalis who adhere to Hinduism, Islam or Buddhism carry on the legacy of that past. And yet they remain essentially Bengali, inhabitants of Bangladesh; and this they feel in their own cultural awareness. The Pathans, the Mughals, the British and many other races have left the impact of their culture, their civilization, their literature, their music and their way of life on the customs and manners, on the religious consciousness and the culture of Bangladesh. A nation would at times forget its identity under the influence of a foreign enemy, but would soon be reawakened to an awareness of its own culture from the urge to retain its distinct existence.

In most cases a nation is not consciously aware of its culture, for

culture remains a natural property of its way of life and is inextricably connected to its very existence as a community. But the emergence of a sense of nationalism makes people conscious of their own culture, as it had happened all over India towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Initially we had surrendered to British rule, and discovered the rich values of English literature. Our store of knowledge was enriched with our gleanings from European science and philosophy. We came to look upon the British with wonder; Europe was a Paradise to us, and the white men the perfect men. In the next phase, we could analyse our new store of knowledge, and the British now appeared to be the Master Race: they were the rulers, we the subjects; they were the masters, we the slaves; they were the exploiters, we the exploited. The face of the country looked different through the blinkers of the English language, the English literary culture and the English civilization. The more thoughtful of the patriots felt disturbed: they felt that they had learnt a lot, but they had lost a good deal more, for they had lost their cultural identity altogether.

The exploitation and oppression of the British gave birth to a new nationalism in India. It may sound surprising, but it is nonetheless true that the oppression, the exploitation, and the administration of a foreign race paved the way to India's freedom. Bangladesh was the first to feel the stirrings of this awareness in India. To build up this national consciousness the lost cultural roots had to be rediscovered.

The educated community at the time had become British-oriented in their clothes, their manners and their habits. Yet the journey back had already begun. Iswar Gupta wrote:

Let's throw away the foreign god,
and take to the native dog. . .

Madhusudan was instrumental in giving Bengali literature a more public character, and Vidyasagar brought Sanskrit literature to the common people. His slippers could serve as a defiance to the audacity of the British ruling class. Bankim Chandra wrote his *Bandemataram*. Sirajuddowlah, slandered in British textbooks of history, became a national hero in the new novels and plays. Mirkashim was recognized as a pioneer in the struggle for freedom.

Rabindranath was there with his works: a Bengali poet was awarded the Nobel Prize; Nazrul played on his *Agnivina*, and Bengalis had a new sense of pride. They recognized the glory in their literature, the pride in their military achievements; and this in its turn led to a struggle to gain their rights. Bangla was in the vanguard of the freedom movement.

British textbooks describe this movement as terrorism; it flared up in Chittagang; Surya Sen gave a direction to the freedom movement. Bengal, was still a part of India at the time. But it has always had

a distinctive character. Lying far away from the heart of the Indian Civilization, this land of tigers and snakes had remained for a long time separated from the mainstream of the Aryan culture. Bengal came into the fold of the Aryan culture of North India at a later phase, only after the Aryans had stopped hating the Bengalis. In the *Puranas* we are described as a race of birds; if people ever came to this part of the country, they would have to go in for self-purificatory rituals. It may be that the authors of the *Shastras* were only discouraging prospective travellers from considerations of the hardship on the way; but the separation of Bengal from the rest of India had given it a distinctive cultural character.

Compared to the rest of India, the food items and cuisine of the Bengalis are different, their *pithapulis*, their *khais* from the *binnidhan*, their curd tied up in a rough towel are all distinctive; the Bengali festival of the new harvest takes place in every home; its new year starts on the first of Baishakha. The Bengalis dress differently, they keep their heads uncovered. The Bengali housewife bears her jar of water not on the head but at the waist. The *Jarigan*, the *Sarigan*, the *Bhatiyali*, the *Bhawaiah*, and the *Bhasana of Manasa* songs enliven the rural life of Bengal. The artistry of the embroidered *naksikanthas*, the range of the *alpana* designs bear the characteristics of the Bengal culture. It was this distinctive cultural character that enabled Bengal to take a stand for political rights so early in the history of India under the British rule. Netaji, the passionate lover of freedom, called India to arms from Bengal.

But this was the phase of history which saw the emergence of an evil power that disrupted the peaceful evolution of the cultural and social life of Bengal. So long the Bengalis had shared a common cultural consciousness, unaffected by religious differences. Hindus and Muslims trained in the cities in the modes of British education and civilization became the first victims of the newest strategy of the British rulers. The people of the country had realized even then the implications of the strategy. But there were few Hindu or Muslim leaders with the mental determination to challenge the trend. The clever British rulers managed to incite the educated community with communal passions; the country seemed to have suddenly become unusually conscious of its religious principles. People considered themselves Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Brahmins, Jains, Parsis first, then Indians or Bengalis or people belonging to some other province. There were more Hindu zamindars and Muslim subjects, so the Hindus were the exploiters and the Muslims the exploited; the Hindus had taken to the British system of education first and were now established in the highest posts of authority, and the Muslims had rejected the new system of education initially and were now paying the price in terms of humiliation and neglect, so the British rulers now decided to grant the Muslims equality! The

Assemblies would have reserved representation for the communities, jobs would be reserved on communal considerations, even the schools would have seats reserved for non-Hindu students. Thus a nation became conscious of its rights on a communal plane, and they felt that they could not stay together any longer, they were different. And they soon came to demand separate territorial existence. Hindus and Muslims were soon demanding rights and privileges on communal considerations. The national culture was now split into communal cultures.

In 1947 India was divided into Hindusthan and Pakistan; people rushed to their artificial motherlands with a strange enthusiasm. The hereditary homes, the presiding deity of the home, the *pujamandap* and the *dotmancha* were abandoned in a haste; the graves of the forefathers and the *masjids* and *maktabs* were left behind. The leaders had new positions, the traders had their profits, but the people? Within a year they realized that the rich had played a trick on them; they had been used like marionettes, those who had manipulated the strings were already so powerful that they could not be touched.

The land of the country was divided; the wealth was divided. Then it was the turn for history, tradition and culture to be divided. But there was a problem in this sphere. Since there was no longer a geographical entity called Bengal, West Bengal took over the history, the literature and the culture of Bengal as its heritage. But the Islamic state of East Pakistan was left without a past. The East Pakistani could not claim any past history, and tradition, any literature, or any cultural line for his own. West Pakistan was prepared to supply it with a heritage provided they considered themselves Muslims first, and then they could easily find the origins of their traditions, history and culture in the Arab world: they could then consider themselves alien victors in this country. The East Pakistanis were told: "the conventions and patterns of behaviour common here are all derived from the Hindus, hence you should abandon them, even hate them! Children of Adam, beware of pollution! Keep your distance from the *Kafers*! Remember, you are Muslims, otherwise *habiya dozakh* stares you in the face! You are inhabitants of an Islamic State. Even if they are thousands of miles away from you, the Sindhis, the Baluchis, the Pathans and the Punjabis are your brethren, they are your closest kinsmen, you have to be united with them. Your neighbours in West Bengal are Hindus and therefore our enemies. We have to confine ourselves within the fortress of a firmly held religion. We have to protect ourselves from the evil touch of anything in the world that is not Mussalmani." But the East Pakistanis noticed how the West Pakistanis had connexions with the whole world, India not excluded. They were told that the West Pakistanis were authentic Mussalmans, the East Pakistanis were hybrid, and therefore they needed purification.

The movement for purification was carried into all the spheres of life. The West Pakistani rulers and the Muslim League politicians in East Pakistan were the new Pirs or lawgivers.

The reforms affected the externals of culture first. The use of utensils made of brass and bell-metal was condemned, eating habits were changed. Men dressed differently; they started wearing caps with the Sherwani and the Pyjamas. Women tried to look Mussulmani in shalwar, kamiz, and dopattas. The *tīp* on the forehead was abandoned as a Hindu convention. The marriage rituals started changing on the same excuse. Restrictions and inhibitions were imposed on the conventions of folk life.

Islamic history was introduced at all levels to make the people conscious of their newly imposed traditions. A book called *Samajpath* was compulsory reading for all classes, from the third to the tenth; it recounted a fantastic assortment of false history, geography, politics and lives of great men. The *Deeniyat* became compulsory reading. Yet the East Pakistanis could not be made into 'real Mussalmans'. A new textbook of history was written—*Desh o Krishti* (The Land and its Culture). The students revolted, demonstrated in protest, struck and refused to accept the new culture manufactured in the Islamic workshops.

The need was felt to establish a common State Language for the whole of Pakistan to strengthen the Islamic fraternity! Within a year after partition the ties of fraternity were loosened. On the 23rd of February, 1948, the late Dharendra Nath Dutt, a member of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, demanded that Bengali, along with English and Urdu, should be one of the languages used in the Assembly. His proposal was opposed by Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Khwaja Nazimuddin, Chief Minister of East Bengal, and Maulavi Tamizuddin Khan, Vice-President of the Assembly. The Bengalis of East Pakistan were rudely shaken out of their slumber. Students observed a protest strike in Dacca on March 11. Many students were injured and arrested.

On March 19, Governor General Muhammad Ali Jinnah came to Dacca; speaking at the Racecourse Maidan and at Curzon Hall, he declared Urdu to be the only State Language for Pakistan. The students rose in protest.

While the richer sections accepted Urdu as their first language and started trying to prove themselves genuine Pakistanis, the middle classes, and particularly the students, started seeking their heritage. They refused to accept a situation which had taken away their past and had thrown them upon a no-man's land; they were conscious of their past history, their rich literary and cultural heritage.

The result was the Language Movement of 1952. Salam, Barkat became its martyrs. The germs of revolt were born in the blood that

they shed. While the sherwani and the cap remained the official dress, the common people wore pyjamas and punjabis. The women marched in processions through the streets decorated with *alpana* towards the martyrs' memorial, wearing saris, flowers in their hands.

The ruling class that had set itself up as the protectors of religion were shocked; they found it wrong, sinful, and Kaferi behaviour! The Bengali students retorted: We are fighting for rights that belong to us from our birth; we are Bengalis, Bengali is our mother tongue, the language to which we are born; our songs, our *alpana*, our floral tributes are marks of our culture.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was already in jail. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, Janab Abul Hasem, Professor Ajit Kumar Guha, Professor Munir Chowdhury, Professor Muzaffar Ahmed and hundreds of students, workers, and ordinary passers-by were put behind the bars in 1952.

As a consequence, the Muslim League Government had a crushing defeat in East Pakistan in 1954 elections; in 1956 the Pakistan Legislature recognized Bengali as one of the State Languages.

But the literary purge continued. Abdul Hai, Head of the Department of Bengali, Dacca University, was condemned for having included the works of Bankim Chandra in the syllabus. Governor Monem Khan called the Vice-chancellor Osman Gani and demanded explanation. Syed Ali Ahsan was removed from his post at the Bangla Academy for having allowed a production of the play *Krishnakumari* by Madhusudan Dutt. Daud, Adamji, the Habib Bank, the National Bank, and the President himself offered various awards, with the sole purpose of buying up the writers and literature itself. But the Bengalis were determined. They started celebrating the First of Baishakh, the beginning of the Bengali New Year, and the 25th of Baishakh, the birth anniversary of Rabindranath.

The Government took a sterner attitude. Iqbal was acknowledged as the national poet of Pakistan. Again the Bengalis protested: what about us? They were told: Well, you can have Nazrul Islam for your national poet. His name alone made him acceptable; though resident in West Bengal, he was a Mussalman! But he presented a problem; for Nazrul had written, not only about the Mussalmans, but also about the three hundred and thirty million gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. His *Shyamasangeets* and *Keertans* have moved the hearts of the Bengali people. So Nazrul could be accepted only after the proper revisions. The Hindu elements in Nazrul were expunged, words were substituted. Nazrul's lines—"*Daroan gai gan/Shono oi Rama hdi*" (The sentry sings/he sings of Rama)—became "*Daroan gai gan/Keho nai Khoda bai*" (The sentry sings/There's none but Khoda). The word "*Shmashan*" (the Hindu cremation ground) was changed to "*Goras*

than" (the Muslim burial ground). With all such modifications, Nazrul could find a place beside Iqbal as a national poet.

In 1958, the Bengalis were punished; military rule was clamped upon them. As the restrictions became severer, the flames of revolt spread through the entire span of the community. Governor Monem Khan emerged as the head of the State in East Pakistan; he considered it a misfortune that he had been born in Bangladesh. He hated the Bengali language, the Bengali literature, and the Bengali culture.

The Government had already taken the initiative in using Bengali only in Arabic and Roman scripts. But the trend was opposed by the great scholar, Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah. The people stood by him, and the Government's move was frustrated.

In 1963-64, the Governor was more kindly to the Bengali language, literature, and culture. He set up a committee, with experts from the Bangla Academy and the Dacca University, for language reforms; but the step was opposed by Dr. Enamul Haq, Professor Abdul Hai, and Munir Chowdhury.

Alongside a National Reconstruction Organization was sponsored to encourage the propagation of Pakistani culture and *tamaddun*. Millions of rupees were spent to reclaim the Bengalis to the Islamic consciousness from which they had strayed. A few Bengali traitors took advantage of these steps. Dr. Hasan Zaman was their leader.

Governor Monem Khan banned musical or dance performances by girls on a public stage. The Bulbul Lalit Kala Kendra was warned that girls over the age of fifteen must get proper permits from the Government before they could appear on any stage. The cultural life of Dacca was thus gagged. But the Government made girls dance on the streets of Dacca to welcome foreign guests! The stages were closed to girls, and they were sent down to dance on the open streets. That was the paradox of Monem Khan's orthodoxy.

The National Reconstruction Organization spent crores of rupees. The money was spent, but the impact was nowhere to be seen. All the efforts to write Bengali in Roman scripts proved ineffective.

Another cultural area was opened up with the introduction of Television in Dacca, the capital of East Pakistan. The Television came to feature programmes of dance, music, and theatre. But there were Government orders that the girls would not put the *tip* on their foreheads, for that went against Islam, the words 'ma' or 'baba' for mother and father were banned in plays and were substituted by 'amma' and 'abba'. The sari worn in a particular homely style was also prohibited. But the Government orders only served to arouse the people's conscience. Attempts to organize communal riots failed. Khwaja Shaha-buddin, the Minister for Broadcasting and Information, proposed the ban on the songs of Tagore. There were many explanations for this order.

Eighteen teachers and intellectuals, in a statement, declared that Rabindranath is an inalienable part of the literature and culture of East Pakistan. It is blasphemy, said forty paid agents of the Government. Students of Bangladesh still refer to these people as the 'forty thieves'.

The Nazrul Academy was set up to challenge Rabindranath. I do not know of any other poet who has been insulted and humiliated in a foreign country in the way Nazrul has been, when his name had been exploited for a nefarious political purpose.

There was greater enthusiasm after this in the observance of the 25th of Baishakh; the 22nd of Shravan, the death anniversary of Togore, also came to be commemorated. East Pakistan became wild with festivity on the First of Baishakh; *alpanas* appeared at marriage ceremonies. The decorated *pinris* (low wooden seats) and *kulos* (large oblong cane plates with side upraised used as winnowing fans) reappeared. Another old custom was reintroduced to the marriage ceremony in Bengali Muslim families—henceforth five married women would welcome the bride and the bridegroom again with lamps placed on the decorated *kulo*. The sound of music and bursting crackers became part of the marriage ceremony.

Monem Khan found all this unbearable. He seemed to have gone mad when he charged Sheikh Mujib with conspiracy against Pakistan in association with India. A large number of Central Government, Military and Civil Officers and political workers were put behind bars as collaborators with Mujib in the same conspiracy.

The voice of Bangladesh was silenced for a while. But the anger flamed up one day in the Jagannath College campus, when thousands of students raised the slogan: Withdraw the Agartala Conspiracy Case. Within a little while the angry voices of the students had spread like a bush fire through the length and breadth of the country; there was an action committee with ten student leaders. Seven and a half crores of Bengalis accepted them as their leaders. Slogans were heard all over the country: Jai Bangla, Bangla for Bengalis, Surya Sen's Bangla, Titumir's Bangla, Bangla—Yours and Mine. The notes of the Rabindra-sangeet were heard again, the words were sung in the fields and on the roads: "Amar Sonar Bangla ami tomai bhalobasi" ("O Golden Bengal of Mine, I love you").

Sheikh Mujib was released; student leader Tofayel Ahmed greeted him as *Bangabandhu* (Friend of Bengal) on behalf of the nation. A new Sun rose over Bengal.

Ayub Khan and Monem Khan were ousted. Yahya seemed to be more of a liberal when he promised elections. The Bengalis were happy again.

While Bangladesh lived through floods and tornadoes, Yahya Khan toured China and came back to his capital. A million of Bengalis died

in these natural calamities, but the Government remained unmoved and indifferent. An alien government stationed a thousand miles away was not concerned in the least with deaths in their colony. The Bengalis realized how helpless they were, not only in their linguistic, literary, or cultural life, but also economically. The foreign exchange that they had earned only served to enrich Islamabad and turn it into a Paradise. Dams in West Pakistan made the deserts fertile, while the well-watered, fertile soils of Bangladesh were flooded. Bangladesh demanded a new deal, and that immediately. Time had been wasted; twenty-five years had been wasted journeying on a narrowly sectarian and difficult way.

The elections came. Bangabandhu became the Father of the Nation. A shrewd Yahya Khan greeted him as the future Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The phase of history that followed does not belong to the history of East Pakistan. It was history shared by India and Bangladesh. A crore of refugees defied the geographic and political boundaries that kept the two Bengals separate and sought shelter in that country. It retained its traditional love for the guest, it worshipped the guest as the greatest god, and received the refugees as beloved brethren. Sm. Gandhi reassured us with her words of hope and promise. She assured us of security at first. But then she rose as a goddess bent on destroying evil, at the assault on humanity. She went to different countries, carrying everywhere with her an appeal for the preservation of human rights. The conscience of the world was aroused: only a few powerful foreign States still remained indifferent. Truth and the will of the people triumphed over all the odds.

The sovereignty of Bangladesh was recognized first by the Government of India and the people of India. Bonds of love and affection tied us together.

The people triumphed; the world wondered at the victory achieved by the liberation forces. It added to the glory of Indiraji: the Government and the people of the Soviet Union shared in the glory. A new age dawned on Bangladesh. The Bhutto-Yahya clique had to submit to world opinion. The people of India and Bangladesh struggled together under the leadership of India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to bring back Mujib, a free man. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Father of the Nation, was received on a soil on which three million Bengalis had shed their blood.

We have at last achieved the right to know ourselves. And now we can tell the world with a free conscience: We are Bengalis, Bangla is our land, the Bengali literature is our literature, the traditions and culture of Bengal are our capital, the means to our future progress.

The small village surrounded by coconut, palm, and the *supari*

trees, is a shelter of affection. Rammohun, Vidyasagar, Rabindranath, and Nazrul are our literary heritage. A song by Rabindranath is our national anthem, a song by Nazrul inspires our army. The *shapla* is our national flower. The Bengalis still make offerings at the *Sitalatala*, for relief from diseases; they offer milk and bananas to *Manasa*, for protection from snakes; *Satyanarayan* becomes the *Satyapir*. The *Jari*, the *Sari*, and the *Bhasans* of *Manasa* are our folk songs. The *Bhatiyali* and the *Bhawaiya* are part of the folk culture of Bangladesh. the twentyfirst of February is our national day, the first of *Baishakh* the Bengali New Year's Day. We can now celebrate without any obstruction the twentyfifth of *Baishakh*, the eleventh of *Jyaishta*, and the twentysecond of *Shravana*.

We play the *shanai* at marriages, we paint *alpanas* on the floor for any ceremony. And we are all Bengalis. We may be Hindus, Mussalmans, Buddhists or Christians, but our religions do not stand in the way of our accepting our cultural inheritance. We are men first and the religion of man is our religion. Bangladesh is a secular State, Socialism is our creed. Hence it is our hope that the evil touch of a cultural crisis will never overshadow our life again.

India and Burma are our neighbours, we shall live from now on in a festive spirit of give and take, we shall be enriched and our cultural consciousness will be fulfilled.

Jai Bangla, Jai Hind.

(Translated)

THE VALEDICTORY SESSION

THE CURTAIN was rung down on the international seminar with the valedictory session held at 3 p.m. on April 18, 1972 at the Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture with Mr. Quamruzzaman, M.C.A. of Bangladesh in the chair.

Mr. Subrata Banerji of the Indian Mission, Bangladesh, spoke on the occasion followed by Prof. Salahuddin Ahmed also of Bangladesh. The other speakers were Dr. Mazharul Islam and Mr. Mahiuddin Haider of Bangladesh and Dr. P. D. Gupta and Mr. Vishnukant Shastri of India.

Justifying the effort of friendship between the two countries—India and Bangladesh—Mr. Banerji thought that it was necessary and even vital for the countries to strive for friendship and co-operation in the face of the disruptive forces still prevalent. This effort should be viewed as an experiment and a beginning to establish strong bonds of friendship between all the countries of south-east Asia, by which alone the countries in this region can withstand the machination of the big powers. Commenting on the shortcomings of the seminar he observed that the sessions had been too academic and there had been little time left for informal discussions which could have helped the participants more to understand one another, bridging a period of separation and lack of communication spanning over twenty five years.

Prof. Salahuddin Ahmed, however, thought that in comparison with what have been gained the shortcomings were few. To him coming to Calcutta was almost like coming back home. He handsomely congratulated the organizers of the Seminar on behalf of the Rajsahi University as well as the people of Bangladesh for giving them the opportunity of meeting the Indian scholars.

In a very touching speech Dr. Mazharul Islam also thanked the organizers of the Seminar and said that Bangladesh would also be glad to hold such seminars in future once the financial situation of the country improved. As many of the problems of the two countries needed mutual help, understanding and co-operation, such seminars were to be effective beyond the realm of ordinary friendship. He gratefully remembered the hospitality which he and many other scholars from Bangladesh received from the C. U. Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti, in particular, and the people of this country, in general, during their stay in this country. The youngest participant, Mr. Mahiuddin Haider, also spoke in similar vein. During his stay here he never felt that he had been in a foreign country, he said. Prof. Vishnukant Shastri, emphasized upon the need of cultural exchange between the two countries.

A few resolutions were then read and unanimously passed by the meeting. The first resolution was on the rapporteurs report presented on behalf of the rapporteurs by Dr. Buddhadeva Bhattacharyya. The second resolution, moved by Mr. S. M. Banerji was on the foundation of an Institute of Indo-Bangladesh Studies. The President of the meeting thereafter moved a resolution extending solidarity to the people of Vietnam in their struggle for national liberation. Dr. I. N. Tewary moved a resolution for the formation of an Editorial Board to facilitate the publication of the seminar papers and Dr. Dhrubajyoti Lahiry proposed the formation of a Steering Committee for the exchange of teachers and students between Bangladesh and India.

Sri S. M. Banerji of Calcutta University then handed over a gift of books donated by the C. U. Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti to the representative of the Vice-Chancellor, Jahangirnagar University.

The President then called upon Father Pierre Fallon, S. J. to deliver the valedictory speech. The full text of the speech follows.

THE VALEDICTORY ADDRESS BY FATHER P. FALLON S.J.

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be here among you and be permitted to deliver this valedictory address. A worthier man than myself, Professor Yusuf Ali, the Minister of Education of the Government of Bangladesh, ought to have delivered this address; he was prevented from attending this Seminar by more important and urgent tasks. My friend, Professor Dilip Chakravarty, the most capable and zealous Secretary of our Calcutta University Bangladesh Sahayak Samiti, invited me to take his place.

I must therefore, as this Seminar comes to an end, bid you good-bye. But I would like these words of farewell to be more than a ceremonial formality. This Seminar in fact has been much more than an ordinary academic gathering, its meaning goes far beyond the immediate results achieved by its learned deliberations. To this Seminar have come scholars from various Universities of India; friends especially dedicated to the cause of Bangladesh have come from Ceylon; we have had the very great joy of welcoming many dear friends from Bangladesh itself, eminent representatives of Dacca University, of Rajshahi and Chittagong Universities, Jahangirnagar University, of the Bangla Academy of Dacca, of the Bangladesh Sikshak Samiti and of the Planning Commission. This reunion has made us feel how close is the unity which binds us all in our common devotion to similar ideals of freedom, secularism and socialism; this realization augurs well for the future; the seminar, we all fervently hope, is but a humble beginning of a long-standing co-operation and intimate association between the intellectual leaders of our various countries.

We have much to learn from each other because we have many problems common to all of us. May I add that we, Indians, feel that we have much help to receive from our friends and brothers of Bangladesh. When millions of refugees came to India asking for shelter and protection, when Bangladesh suffered and bled, we all rallied to do whatever we could to come to the assistance of these persecuted friends. To-day, it is our turn to ask for assistance: an assistance of another type, but not less precious. Our Bangladesh friends have given us wonderful examples of the truest secularism, they are giving us great examples of practical socialism; they have made the most heroic sacrifices to establish in their country a political and social regime in which men shall no longer be divided from men along lines of religious communities or social classes. Not only we in India, but men all over the world have much to learn from the leaders of Bangladesh.

As we bid farewell to our friends, we know that the work they have undertaken, is going to be a long and arduous one, and yet we also know that their hearts and minds are full of hope. It has been a rewarding experience for us all to feel that strong and lively sense of optimism prevalent among our friends from Bangladesh. They have

gone through days of agony, they never despaired. They have paid in blood and toil an extremely heavy price, they did not mind the cost. There is nothing naive or illusory in the hope and optimism which animate them, the tragedy through which they have lived has given to them a most courageous realism allied to uncompromising idealism. There was a time last year when the struggle of Bangladesh looked very much like the ancient struggle fought at Karbala; like Imam Hussain and his little band of heroic companions, the men of Bangladesh were being decimated and apparently defeated by superior forces of evil. But evil was in fact defeated, righteousness prevailed, and this new Karbala has, like the ancient one, brought about the restoration of justice and truth. The long and painful days of struggle seemed to be like one endless Good Friday, Bangladesh was being crucified; but that Friday of sacrifice and woe has been but a preparation for the glorious Resurrection we are now witnessing. Let our farewell be therefore full of hope: Bangladesh has a great and glorious future; we knew it all along, we are even more convinced of it now that we have met these Bangladesh friends and shared their vision and their hope.

Before concluding these few valedictory words, let me tell you one thing which I deeply realized last year when I had the privilege of going abroad to speak of Bangladesh to people of various countries in the West. In spite of the tardiness of many foreign governments to come resolutely to the help of Bangladesh, I felt, wherever I went, that Bangladesh had countless friends and admirers. Millions of ordinary men and women, millions of young people especially, were profoundly stirred by the tragic events that shook Bangladesh and were full of admiration for the courage of those who fought for freedom, justice, for the establishment of a new society based upon secularism and socialism. The struggle of Bangladesh has brought men, all men, closer to each other, and this is a tremendous blessing. We, in India, feel so immensely grateful to God for this new sense of fraternity and friendship between the people of Bangladesh and the people of India. But, far beyond the frontiers of India and of Bangladesh, vast numbers of people belonging to the most diverse countries of the world feel to-day much closer to the heroic people of Bangladesh and, I believe, closer also to the people of India. Suffering and death will not have been in vain if these bonds of union can be maintained and strengthened in the future. While bidding good-bye to each other, let us therefore renew our determination to work for freedom, justice, and harmonious co-operation among men, in each one of our respective countries and in the world at large. Let these ideals for which the Bangladesh people have fought be and remain our most cherished ideals. Jai Bangladesh! Jai Hind!

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

IN HIS PRESIDENTIAL address, Mr. Quamruzzaman recalled how in the moment of a national catastrophe, the people of Bangladesh all of a sudden realized that the people of India were their own brethren. Veiled in the shroud of false propaganda, hatred and mistrust, they had been kept at a distance by the vested interests. But as soon as the barrier broke down and they had touched the soil of India they at once felt the warmth of the friendship of the Indian people, who embraced them with open arms in Meghalaya, in Tripura, and in West Bengal, gave shelters to vast number of uprooted people, fed them, cared for them, treated them with sympathy, and what is more, shed their own blood for the freedom of Bangladesh. The relation of these two peoples is not just a relation between two friendly countries. Neither is it based on just economic or monetary ties. It is an incomparable unity of souls. Those who worked for this unity, particularly the Prime Minister of India and the people of West Bengal, deserve our thanks and gratitude, he said.

He also recalled how the works of Tagore had inspired the people of Bangladesh during their struggle for freedom. The nationalist movement of the Bengalis had found its culmination in the creation of Bangladesh. The Pakistani rulers by imposing a ban on the songs and poems of Tagore in fact kindled the desire for more of his poems and songs. It had therefore been befitting to his sacred memory that one of his songs was selected as the national anthem of Bangladesh.

Lastly, he thanked the participants for their contribution towards a very successful seminar and hoped that in the near future Bangladesh would be able to play host to such international gatherings of scholars.

Proposing the vote of thanks Dr. P. D. Gupta warmly congratulated those who conceived the ideas of the seminar and who worked hard towards its success.

The seminar, according to him, had been both fruitful and intellectually stimulating.

During the struggle for the freedom of Bangladesh, the memory of Indian struggle for freedom had been rekindled. That is why the reaction of the Indian people had been almost immediate and automatic. They worked wholeheartedly with the Bangladesh people so that the future generations might live free from any exploitation in this part of the continent. He also stressed on the need of the friendship between the two countries. Such seminars would be of great help towards that end, he emphasized. Once again he thanked everyone connected with the Seminar and congratulated them warmly.

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